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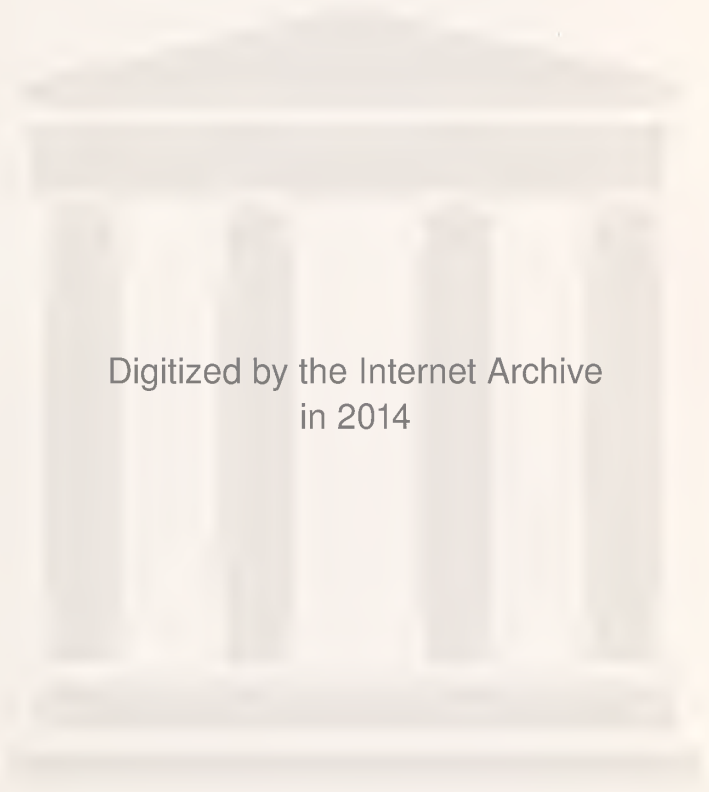
The theological works of
William Beveridge. D.D.



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WILLIAM — BEVERIDGE, DD.

LATE *Bishop of* LORD *St. Asaph.*

Ætat 71

THE

THEOLOGICAL WORKS

OF

WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D.D.

SOMETIME LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

VOL. I.

SERMONS I.—XXIV.

OXFORD:

JOHN HENRY PARKER.

MDCCCXLII.

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PREFACE.

The character of Bishop Beveridge is too well known, and his works too well appreciated, to render any lengthened introduction to a new edition necessary.

A life spent as his was, partly in the deep and laborious study of the early records of the Church, and partly in the active but unobtrusive duties of a parish priest, affords but few materials for a striking memoir, nor does it seem needful to swell the bulk of these volumes by extraneous prefatory matter. The Sermons speak for themselves, nor would any analysis give an adequate idea of the more learned and elaborate works.

Born in the year 1638, the circumstances of Beveridge's early years would either involve him in the confusion and disputes of those troubled times, or they would throw him, as in fact they did, for direction, and guidance, and comfort, amidst those confusions and disputes, on the earlier and better ages of the Church, and on the study of Ecclesiastical Antiquity, yet ever with a view to the elucidation of fundamental truth, and the promotion of practical piety.

Beveridge was entered a member of St. John's College, Cambridge, in May 1653, then under the government of the well-known Dr. Anthony Tuckney; and it is remarkable, considering the works by which they were distinguished in after life, that the compiler and author of the "Pandectæ Canonum" and of the "Codex Canonum Ecclesiæ Primitivæ Vindicatus," and the author of the "Historia Literaria," should have been entered within a very few days of each other members of the same College, where, no doubt, was laid the foundation of that sound learning, perhaps, of those very works themselves for which they are so eminent.

There is apparently, no trace discoverable of any peculiar intimacy existing between them, but there is a coincidence in the lives and pursuits and writings of Bishop Beveridge and Dr. Cave which, in the absence of any very remarkable incident in the history of either of them separately, it may be interesting to mention here.

Both were born within a year, in the same county, and, though not in the immediate neighbourhood of each other, yet at a distance of not many miles—Beveridge, at Barrow-upon-Soar near Loughborough, and Cave at Pickwell, near Melton Mowbray, in the county of Leicester. They were school-fellows at Oakham school, in Rutlandshire, where Cave is described as having received his education, and where, though Beveridge spent only two years, yet those were probably the two years immediately preceding his removal to the University. Both were sons of the incumbents of the above-named parishes, and had relatives who, in the violence of the times, were suspended from their livings.

Both were admitted, as we have seen, members of the same College, within a few days of each other, Cave on the 9th, and Beveridge on the 14th day of May, 1653; and as neither was ordained till after the Restoration, they were employed, doubtless, during much of the period of trial which intervened, on the subject to which the temper and tumult of the times providentially directed so many others — the primitive records and history of the Church, its original constitution, government, discipline, and worship. Both were afterwards settled as parish priests in the same diocese; Beveridge, as vicar of Ealing, to which he was presented in 1661; and Cave, as vicar of Islington, to which he was admitted in 1662. Subsequently they held benefices in the same neighbourhood, in the City of London; Beveridge, that of St. Peter's, Cornhill, which he held from 1672 till raised to the see of St. Asaph in 1704; and Cave, that of Allhallows the Great, in Thames Street, which he held from 1679 till 1691, when he resigned it for the living of Isleworth. Beveridge died Bishop of St. Asaph in 1708; Cave, Canon of Windsor, in 1713.

Beveridge's attention seems, in the first instance, to have been directed to Oriental learning and Chronology; his first publication being a "Treatise on the Excellency and Uses of the Oriental Tongues and a Syriac Grammar," in 1658, and his second, "Institutiones Chronologicæ," published in 1669. But the two great works by which he is best known are, his "Συνοδικον, sive Pandectæ Canonum SS. Apostolorum et Conciliorum, necnon Canonicarum SS. Patrum Epistolarum cum Scholiis," printed at the Theatre,

Oxford, 1672, and the "Codex Canonum Eccl. Primitivæ Vindicatus, ac Illustratus," which followed in 1679, and is inserted in the second volume of the "Patres Apostolici" of Cotelerius.

The great work on which Dr. Cave's reputation mainly rests, the "Historia Literaria," though it was not until late that it grew to its present bulk, was conceived and commenced early in life.

The Prefaces to these volumes alike shew the working of minds weary of the controversies amongst which they lived, deploring the decay of all Christian piety in the din and strife of tongues around them, gradually feeling back their way, as best they could, to primitive doctrine and practice, and tracing these back to their source through the Catholic tradition of the Church.

That this was the pervading feeling of their minds will be evident, not only from the prefaces to those works, the "Codex Canonum Illustratus," and the "Historia Literaria," but from the tone and subject-matter of their English works also. The "Primitive Christianity" of Dr. Cave, which he said had lain by him many years before its publication, and his "Lives of the Apostles and Fathers," and the Dedications and Prefaces to these volumes, evidence a mind throwing itself back upon the contemplation of the Primitive Church, as seen in its government and worship, and exemplified in the lives of the early Christians; whilst the English works of Beveridge, especially his Sermons on the Church, and that, perhaps, best specimen of these, on "The Exemplary Holiness of the Primitive Christians," together

with his work on "The Great Necessity of Public Prayer and Frequent Communion," and his little book on the Catechism, evidence the yearnings of a heart, not content with merely contemplating that picture, but bent on conforming the Church of England to that model. Nor, indeed, did any one on record more nearly succeed in realising his wish, or was, in his measure, so deeply and widely influential, as Beveridge.

His labours earned for him, in his day, the title of "The great Reviver and Restorer of Primitive Piety," and, doubtless, are not lost to us. They are amongst the seeds which have long lain hidden, and are now again springing up and bringing forth fruit an hundredfold. Of course, he speaks of the Church of England in high and glowing language; but he speaks of her, be it remembered, as one of those watchmen who should never hold their peace day nor night, and should give the Lord no rest till He "establish, and make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." He contemplated her as a true branch of the Church Catholic; and as such, cannot bear it should be said of her, in any sense, "Laudatur et alget;" but would fain see her evincing her Primitive and Catholic character, by acting up to her acknowledged rules, by supplying a constant round of Daily Services and Frequent Communions, exercising a more vigorous discipline, and awakening her members to a higher and livelier estimation of the ministration and ordinances of the Church. He saw, what has been well called, an "intrinsic excellence" as yet undeveloped, which he did his best, first by deep piety and learning, and after-

wards by active zeal and constant watchfulness as a parish priest, and as a bishop, to develope, and exemplify, and improve into "practical influence."

Hence his firmness in maintaining things as he found them, and endeavouring to give life and vigour to her whole existing system, and his resolute opposition to the "Scheme of Comprehension," as it was called, and the projected alterations in the Liturgy. Hence, though one may well wonder how any one could tax Beveridge with want of piety or charity, or deem him a formalist or a bigot, yet he incurred on one occasion the taunt of Tillotson,—"Doctor! doctor! charity is better than Rubrics."

However, what was the main object of his life—the restoration of primitive piety and zeal in the English Church —we may see from the tone and subject-matter of his pastoral works before mentioned, his Sermons, his book on the Catechism, and that on Prayer and Frequent Communion, and from the very last act of his life, a bequest to his native parish of Barrow, and to the neighbouring curacy of Mount Sorrell, for the maintenance of the daily service, and, should that fail, "which God forbid!" for the catechising of poor children. His simplicity and godly sincerity in pursuing this end, and his entire disinterestedness and freedom from all ambition, is plain from his known character, and especially from the fact of his conscientious refusal to succeed Bishop Ken, when deprived, at the Revolution, in the Bishoprick of Bath and Wells. He asked the advice of Sancroft. He was bidden in answer to say, "Nolo," and to say it from the heart. He did so;

and the violence with which his refusal was assailed is a curious proof of the jealousy with which one scrupulous conscience is regarded, and the real difficulties which it may throw in the way of secular policy.

For his more learned works, Bishop Beveridge is known to the Church Catholic, and these were published under his own superintendence. For his others his name is endeared to the Church of England in particular. His Sermons, written from time to time to meet the exigencies of his flock, were not published till after his death, and for these he cared to be known only to those to whom he spoke, the souls over whom he watched during so many years with such anxious and unremitting watchfulness.

There are, as has been frequently observed, in the works of Bishop Beveridge, occasional tinges of those opinions which were so rife in his early years, and of which Dr. Tuckney, the Master of his College and Professor of Divinity, was the well-known maintainer in his day; and there are, on the other hand, here and there in his Sermons, those occasional protests against the characteristics of the Church of Rome, common, more or less, to all our divines. But his mind was too essentially practical to entertain Calvinistic opinions; and he was too entirely in earnest in teaching positive truth, and providing real food for his flock, to spend his time and waste his energies in the bare contradiction of error. Homeliness and naturalness are his great characteristics. He writes with the plain, unaffected simplicity, and utter carelessness of all ornament, of a man full of the importance of his subject, who felt the entire

reality of every word he uttered, and was living under the habitual influence of the truths he taught. And we may well enter into the feeling with which the excellent Robert Nelson speaks of the preservation of the Sermons (not apparently intended for the press), as the productions of one who "had a way of gaining people's hearts and touching their consciences, which bore some resemblance to the Apostolical age," and to whose Christian instruction many, within Nelson's own knowledge, "owed, under God, their change of lives."

It only remains to state, that the Sermons are carefully reprinted from the best edition of the works, published in two volumes folio, in 1720, collated with the late edition of the Rev. Hartwell Horne.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

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SERMON I.

CHRIST'S PRESENCE WITH HIS MINISTERS.

MATTHEW xxviii. 20.

And lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.

WE are here assembled in the Name and in the presence of Jesus Christ our Lord; and not only ours, but the Lord of the whole world, having absolute and supreme dominion over the whole creation; not only as He is God, and the Creator of all things, but likewise as man too,—His human nature, by reason of its union to the Divine person, and its perfect obedience to the Divine will, being exalted above, and invested with power over all other creatures whatsoever. For even as He is the Son of Man, "there is given Him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him." And "He having humbled Himself, and become obedient to death, even the death of the cross, therefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name, which is above every name; that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Hence we find the holy Angels themselves waiting upon Him at His birth, in the wilderness, in His agony, and at His resurrection, when they also acknowledged Him to be the Lord, saying, "Come and see the place where the Lord lay;" yea, "all the Angels of God worship Him," and are commanded so to do. And as for this lower world, He hath "the heathen for His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." He hath "dominion from sea to sea, and from

Dan. 7. 14.

Phil. 2. 8-11.

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the river to the ends of the earth. All kings are bound to fall down before Him, and all nations to serve Him."

All creatures, therefore, both in Heaven and earth, are now subject to our Lord Christ; and He orders, governs, and disposeth of them all, according to His own will and pleasure, and so as shall most conduce to His own glory and His Church's good. For God, having "raised Him from the dead, hath set Him at His own right hand, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come, and hath put all things under His feet, and made Him head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." He is the head, therefore, not only of the Church, but over all things, to or for the Church; so that nothing is exempted from His dominion,—nothing in Heaven, in earth, or hell, but what is subject to His power; and, therefore, nothing but what He can do for His own Catholic Church, which He hath purchased with His own blood. He can assist it with His grace, sanctify it by His Spirit, protect it by His power: He can make all things in Heaven and earth work together for its present peace and future glory—maugre all the opposition that men or devils can make against it.

Eph. 1. 20-23.

Thus much I thought good to premise concerning our Lord's power, in order to the explication of the words which I have now read, because He himself taught so when He spake them. For being now about to send His Apostles into the world, to preach and propagate the Gospel which He had planted, He first shews them, as it were, His own commission; acquainting them with the power He had to send them, and that in such words as comprehend all that I have said concerning it, yea, as much as words are able to express. "All power," saith He, "is given unto Me in Heaven and in earth; go ye, therefore, and teach all nations," &c. As if He should have said, I have now all power over all things in the world conferred upon Me; by virtue whereof I command, empower, and commissionate you to enlarge, settle, and govern the Church that I have founded; to administer the Sacraments that I have instituted; and to persuade mankind to embrace My Doctrine, to submit to My

Ver. 18, 19.

Discipline, to obey My Laws, and to come up to the terms which I have procured for them, and propounded to them, in order to their salvation.

"Go ye, therefore," says He, "and teach all nations;" or, as the word μαθητεύσατε properly signifies, "make all nations My disciples, bring them over to My religion, that both Jews and Gentiles may become one flock under Me, the great Shepherd and Bishop of their souls." And this, saith He, I would have you do two ways,—"First, by baptizing them in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," and so initiating them into My Church, upon their consenting to the faith which I have published to the world. And, secondly, "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," that so they may be My disciples indeed; and not only by an outward profession of the faith which I have taught them, but likewise by performing sincere and universal obedience to all the commands that I have laid upon them.

When our Saviour gave this charge to His Apostles, we may easily imagine that they were strangely surprised at the hearing of it. As when God bade Moses go and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt, "Moses said unto Him, Who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Ægypt?" So when our Lord bade His Apostles go and bring all nations out of their idolatries and superstitions into the profession of His religion, the Apostles certainly could not but wonder at it, and say, at least within themselves, "Who are we, a company of poor, weak, and illiterate men, that we should go to all nations—that we should bring them off from the religions of their forefathers, and that we should ever persuade the world to believe in a crucified Christ?" This our Lord foresaw, and therefore, as God answered Moses, saying, "Certainly I will be with thee;" so does our Saviour here encourage his Apostles, saying, "And behold I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

Exod. 3. 11.

[Exod. 3. 12.]

Words of very great importance to us all—to the whole Church of God, especially to the Governors of it, and to those that administer the Word and Sacraments in it: forasmuch as all the success that can be expected from the execution of any ecclesiastical function depends upon the

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performance of this promise, which, therefore, our Lord has so worded, that there is not a word in it but what hath its emphasis, and is much to be observed by us; as He himself seems to intimate by prefacing it with ἰδοὺ, *behold*, take special notice of what I now say unto you.

Hence, therefore, we shall first very briefly consider the words apart, that so we may come to the better understanding of the whole. First, saith He, "I am with you;" I, the Eternal Son of God, and now become the Son of Man too; I, who have the Angels at My beck, and make the devils tremble with My looks; I, who in your sight have caused the storms to cease, the blind to see, the lame to walk, the dead to rise, only with a word of My mouth; I, who was delivered for your offences, but am now raised again for your justification; I, who have all power, both in Heaven and earth committed to Me; "I am with you." Not I *will* be with you, but I *am* with you—in the present tense; minding them thereby of His Divine essence and power, to which all things are present. And therefore, as
John 8. 58. He elsewhere saith, "Before Abraham was, I am." So here "I am with you" at all times, to the "end of the world," as really as at this present.

And then it follows, I am μεθ' ὑμῶν, "with you" My Apostles. For that these words were spoken, and this promise made only to the Apostles, is plain, from that the Eleven only are
Ver. 16. said to be present at this time. And that, besides, this promise is made only to those who now received commission to go and convert all nations to the Christian faith, to baptize and teach mankind the commands of Christ; which commission being granted only to the Apostles, this promise also, annexed to it, must needs belong to them only. But then we must observe likewise, that as it belongs to them only, so it belongs to them all alike. "I am with you," saith He; not with Peter only, or any one or more of you, but with you all equally, one as well as another. Yea, saith He, "I am with you," πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας, "every day;" wheresoever you are, whensoever you do any thing towards the executing the commission which I have now given you, I am with you in the doing of it. And that, too, ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος, "to the very end of the world;" that is, so long as I have a

Church upon earth, which shall be till My coming again to judge the world: all this while I promise to be with you, and therefore, as long as the world shall last.

The words being thus explained apart, that we may rightly apprehend our Lord's meaning in the whole, there are two things to be considered:—

I. In what sense the Apostles were to continue to the end of the world.

II. In what sense our Saviour here promises to be with them all that while.

As for the first, it is plain that our Saviour here supposeth that Apostles were to continue upon earth to the end of the world; for otherwise it would be impossible for Him to be with them so long, and, by consequence, to perform this promise to them. But it is as plain likewise, that the persons to whom our Saviour speaks these words were not to be here so long, being all long ago dead. And therefore, I do not see how we can possibly understand the words in any other sense than this, even that our Lord spake them to His Apostles, not as private persons, as Peter, James, or John, &c. but as Apostles—as persons now placed by Him in an office that should always continue in His Church. So that the promise is made not so much to the persons of the Apostles as to the office Apostolical; or, at least, to their persons only, as vested with that office, and, by consequence, to all persons, to the end of the world, that should ever have that office conferred upon them.

For our better understanding of this, we must consider what it is properly to be an Apostle of Christ, or wherein the office purely Apostolical consisted. For which we must know, that those whom the Scriptures, and we from them, call *Apostles*, had many extraordinary privileges granted to them, which were not essential to their office, nor peculiar to them as Apostles, but common to them with other disciples, and therefore were to die with them. As for example, Were they called immediately by Christ himself? So were the Seventy, who were the ear and eye-witnesses of what Christ taught and did; so were many others as well as they. Were they divinely inspired to speak all manner of languages? to foretell things to come? to work miracles to confirm their doctrine? so were they which were no Apostles, as well as they that were. And therefore such things as these cannot be

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looked upon as any part of the Apostolical office, but only as extraordinary favours and privileges vouchsafed to the persons of the Apostles.

But the office, properly Apostolical, consisted only in such things as had an immediate reference to the propagating, edifying, and governing of the Church in all ages. Indeed, our Saviour himself gives the Apostles a particular description of their office, in the very commission He here grants them for the execution of it; commanding them to convert all nations to His religion, to administer the Sacraments to them, and to teach them all things that He had commanded them. Under which is contained whatsoever is necessary to the instruction and government of His Church in all ages; as the ordaining persons to do it, censuring those who refuse instruction, comforting and encouraging those who receive it, and the like. This was properly the office Apostolical, which, therefore, was not to die with the persons of the Apostles, but was to be transmitted by them to all after-ages, as our Lord himself intimates in the very description of it; for He here bids His Apostles go and make all nations His disciples; which, it is plain, the persons He spake these words to, neither did, nor ever could accomplish, being to continue, as we know they did, but a little while upon earth, wherein it was impossible for them to go over all nations, much more to persuade them all to embrace the Christian faith. And therefore this command itself, as well as the promise, must needs be so understood, as to be given not only to the persons of the Apostles then present, but to all that should succeed them in that office to the end of the world. So that from this very command, we reasonably conclude that these words were meant not only of the Apostles themselves, but of their successors in that office all along, until all nations have received the Gospel of Christ;—much more, if we consider the promise annexed to it, "And lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world;" which cannot possibly be fulfilled, unless there be Apostles, or persons vested with the Apostolical office, alway unto the end of the world.

Hence therefore it was that the Apostles, having received this command and promise from our Lord, and understanding from thence that it was His pleasure that they should transfer their office to all future ages, by ordaining others

into it, took care to do it. For besides the Eleven, to whom these words were spoken, we find Matthias, Paul, and Barnabas, admitted into the same office, and expressly called Apostles as well as they. So is Epaphroditus, bishop of Philippi, called by St. Paul himself; and if we consult the ancient records of the Church, we shall there find that James bishop of Hierusalem, Mark of Alexandria, Timothy of Ephesus, Titus of Crete, and Clemens of Rome, were all called Apostles. And as Theodoret observes, τοὺς νῦν καλουμένους Ἐπισκόπους, Ἀποστόλους ὠνόμαζον, 'those which we now call Bishops, the primitive Christians called Apostles.' And so indeed may all Bishops, rightly ordained, be called, as having the same office in the Church which the Apostles had; and, therefore, the office which Matthias was chosen into is called Ἐπισκοπή, the office of a Bishop. Hence St. Cyprian sometimes calls Bishops by the name of Apostles, sometimes Apostles by the name of Bishops; and the reason is, because Bishops, as St. Hierom expresses it, *Apostolorum locum tenent*, 'they supply the place of the Apostles.' Hence also, not only St. Cyprian,[1] but Irenæus[2] and Tertullian,[3] assert Bishops to be the Apostles' successors, and reckon up the succession of several of them from the Apostles themselves. And St. Hierom[4] himself, having affirmed all Bishops, of whatsoever city, great or small, to be *ejusdem meriti, ejusdem et sacerdotii*, he adds, *cæterum omnes Apostolorum successores sunt*,—'they are all successors to the Apostles.'

Phil. 2. 25.

[Theod. Interpret. Epist. i. ad Tim. c. iii. vol. iii. p. 652. edit. Noesselt. Hal. 1771.]

Acts 1. 20.

[Epist. iii. ad Rogatian. fratr. p. 6. Cf. Ep. xlv. p. 88. ed. Amst. 1691, et Fell. Oxon. 1682.]

[Hieron. Epist. xxvii. ad Marcellam, tom. iv. par. 2. p. 65.]

And therefore, whatsoever our Lord said to the Apostles as such, all succeeding Apostles or Bishops are obliged by it as well as they. As St. Cyprian observed long ago, saying, *Christus qui dicit ad Apostolos, ac per hoc ad omnes præpositos, qui Apostolis vicariâ ordinatione succedunt;* for the office is the same now as it was then. So that in the Apostles' days, and in all after-ages, and in all places of the world, as the same Father words it,[5] *Episcopatus unus est, cujus a singulis in solidum pars tenetur:* 'there is but one Episcopacy,

[Epist. lxvi. Cf. Ep. lxxv. p. 225. ed. Fell.]

[1] [In l. c.]

[2] [Iren. adv. Hæres. lib. iii. c. 3. pp. 200, 201, ed. Grabe. Cf. Hær. l. iv. c. 63. Euseb. Hist. Eccl. V. c. 6.]

[3] [Tertull. de Præscr. Hæret. cap. xxxii. p. 213, ed. Rigalt.]

[4] [Hieron. Epist. ci. ad Evangel. tom. iv. par. 2. p. 803, ed. Ben.]

[5] [Cyp. de Unit. Eccles. p. 108. "Ut Episcopatum quoque ipsum, unum atque indivisum probemus."—Cf. Epist. lv. "Episcopatus unus, Episcoporum multorum concordi numerositate diffusus."—p. 112.]

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but one Episcopal office, a part whereof is wholly possessed by every Bishop;' which, as it quite overthrows the supremacy which the Bishop of Rome pretends to over all other Bishops, so it sufficiently proves the true sense and meaning of the words in my text. For, seeing the office is still one and the same now which it was in the Apostles' days, and so will continue to the end of the world; seeing also there always will be such Apostles in the Church, our Saviour, speaking to the Eleven as Apostles, might well say, "Lo! I am with you to the end of the world."

Having thus discovered in what sense the Apostles were to continue in the Church to the end of the world, we are now to consider in what sense our Lord here promises to be always with them. To find out which, we need not have recourse to the wild and extravagant opinion of the Ubiquitarians, asserting the human nature of Christ to be every where present. Neither is it sufficient to observe that His Divine essence is present with them; for so it is with every creature, no creature being able to subsist without it. Whereas our Saviour here promiseth to be with His Apostles in some such peculiar sense as can belong only to them, and to them only as His Apostles. And that we might not be mistaken in a matter of such consequence as this, He himself hath elsewhere explained himself, and left upon record how these words are to be understood. For, as He here promises His Apostles, that He will be with them to the end of the world, so He elsewhere tells them that His Holy Spirit shall be always with them. "And I will pray the Father," saith He, "and He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth;" which is the same in effect with His own being always with them. For the Spirit, proceeding from the Son, as well as from the Father, and being of the same nature and essence with Him, *Wheresoever the Spirit is, there is Christ also.* So that, in short, our Saviour here promiseth His Apostles, that He will be always with them to the end of the world, by His Holy Spirit accompanying and assisting of them in the discharge of their Apostolical office. In the discharge, I say, of their Apostolical office; for we are still to remember what I observed before, even that these words were spoken to the

John 14. 16.

Apostles and their successors only as such; and therefore Christ's presence with them by His Holy Spirit, here promised, cannot be understood only of His illuminating, or sanctifying, or comforting presence, which He vouchsafeth to all believers, as well as unto them; but it must be understood in such a sense as is proper to the Apostles, Pastors, and Governors of the Church in all ages: which, in brief, amounts to no more nor less than this, even that Christ, having constituted such an office in His Church for the government and edification of it to the end of the world; He here promiseth that He himself, by His Holy Spirit, will be always present at the execution of it, so as to make it effectual to the great ends and purposes for which it was designed.

To explain this more fully to you, it will be necessary to instance in the several parts of the Apostolical office, and to shew how Christ, according to His promise, is always present, by His Spirit, at the performance of them. Now the first and principal part of this office is the ordaining others into it, and giving them power to ordain others, and so successively to the end of the world; which is necessarily supposed in the promise itself, as that without which it could never be fulfilled.

The first, therefore, that were ordained into this office, were ordained by Christ himself. The form and manner of which ordination is set down, where it is said that Christ, coming to His Apostles, said to them, "Peace be with you; as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" where we may plainly see how our Saviour would be with His Apostles, after His body was removed from them, even by His Holy Spirit, which He therefore breathes from Himself into them, by that means consecrating them His Apostles and vicegerents upon earth; telling them withal, that as "the Father sent Him, so He sent them." Whereby He certifies them, that whatsoever power He had received from the Father for the instruction and government of His Church, He now left the same with them, or rather with the Holy Spirit which He breathed into them; and by consequence, that as He sent them, so were they to send others, by conferring the Spirit upon them, and so from one to another all along, that the Spirit

John 20. 21, 22.

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which they now received might continue with them and their successors, and so supply His place upon earth until His coming again.

Hence the Apostles, being thus ordained and instructed by our Lord, took special care to transfer the same Spirit to others which they had received from Him. But this they could not do after the same manner as Christ had done it to them, even by breathing upon them; for that way was peculiar to Christ, from whom the Spirit proceedeth. Wherefore, they being doubtless directed thereto by the same Spirit, transmitted it to others by laying their hands upon them, which was the old way that had been used in the Church before; for so Moses communicated the spirit of wisdom to Joshua, thereby constituting him his successor in the government of Israel, even by laying his hands upon him. Thus Paul and Barnabas were ordained by the special appointment of the Holy Ghost himself; for it is said, that they having "fasted and prayed, laid their hands upon them," and so sent them out; who, thereupon, are said in the next verse to be sent by the Holy Ghost; it being now conferred upon them by the imposition of hands. Thus St. Paul communicated χάρισμα τοῦ Θεοῦ, as he calls it, the gift of the Spirit, unto Timothy. And wheresoever we read that the Apostles ordained any, they still did it after this manner, even by laying their hands upon them; and that too whether they ordained them into their whole office, or else into any part of it. For the whole care of the Church being committed unto them, they had power to constitute what officers they thought fit under them: but still they did it by laying their hands upon them, and so communicating of the same Spirit unto them which they had received from Christ. As when they found it necessary to have Deacons in the Church, to take care of the widows, they ordained them by laying their hands upon them, thereby transferring so much of the Spirit upon them as was necessary for that office. And when they afterwards saw it very necessary that there should be other officers in the Church, which we now call Presbyters, that should have power under them to preach the Gospel and administer the Sacraments in places where they themselves could not be always present; upon these also they laid their hands, and

Deut. 34. 9.

Acts 13. 3.

2 Tim. 1. 6.

Acts 6. 6.

by that means communicated so much of the Spirit unto them as was necessary for the due and effectual execution of the said office.

Thus, therefore, it is, that the Apostolical office hath been handed down from one to another, ever since the Apostles' days to our time, and so will be to the end of the world, Christ himself being continually present at such imposition of hands; thereby transferring the same Spirit which He had first breathed into His Apostles, upon others successively after them, as really as He was present with the Apostles themselves, when He first breathed it into them. Insomuch, that they who are thus ordained are said to be made Bishops by the Holy Ghost himself, as well as the Apostles were. Acts 20. 28. By which means the Holy Catholic Church always hath been, and still is, truly Apostolical, as it is called in the Nicene Creed. And the several parts of the Apostolical office are now as effectually performed by their successors, and others ordained under them, as they were while the Apostles themselves lived. For it was not the persons of the Apostles, but their office, influenced and assisted by the Spirit of God, that made the Sacraments they administered to be valid, and their preaching of the Gospel so prevalent upon those that heard it. Though Paul himself planted and [1 Cor. 3. 6.] Apollos watered, it was God only that gave the increase.

And so it is to this day: all the efficacy that there is or can be in the administration of any ecclesiastical office, depends altogether upon the Spirit of God going along with the office, and assisting at the execution of it; without which, the Sacraments we administer would be but empty signs, and our preaching no more than beating of the air. Whereas on the other side, Christ, according to His promise, being always present by His Holy Spirit at the administration of the several offices which He has ordained in His Church, they can never fail of their designed effect, if the persons to whom they are administered be but rightly disposed and qualified for it. By this means, they that are duly baptized are "born again, not only of water, but of the Spirit also;" and John 3. 5. so together with the "washing of regeneration, they have the renewing of the Holy Ghost." Hence also, in the Sacra- Tit. 3. 5. ment of the Lord's Supper, the worthy receiver does really

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by faith partake of the mystical body and blood of Christ, and of such influences of the Holy Spirit as shall enable him to walk as becomes a member of Christ. And whensoever we read, preach, or publish the Gospel as Christ taught it, the Holy Spirit goes along with it, so that it becomes the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. And seeing our Lord thus continually accompanies the Apostles and their successors, so as to vouchsafe His Spirit to those on whom they lay their hands, and to co-operate by the same spirit with those who are so ordained by them, in their administration of the word and Sacraments; hence He may well be said to be always with them, according to the promise He makes them in my text.

[Rom. 1. 16.]

But besides that imposition of hands, whereby the Apostles transmitted the Spirit they had received, together with their Apostolical office, down to succeeding ages, we find them sometimes laying their hands on believers baptized, that thereby the Holy Ghost might come upon them, not with respect to any office, but only to confirm and strengthen them in the Christian faith.

For when the Samaritans had received the word of God, and were baptized by Philip, who was no Apostle, but only a Deacon, the Apostles at Hierusalem hearing of it, sent Peter and John unto them, who having laid their hands upon them, they received the Holy Ghost. Philip indeed, having had the Apostles' hands laid upon him, had thereby received power to baptize them with water and the Holy Ghost; but it seems he had no power to lay his hands upon them, and by that means to confer any greater measure of the Spirit upon them. No, that was to be done only by the Apostles themselves; who therefore sent two of their own body, as far as from Hierusalem to Samaria, on purpose to do it; which certainly they would never have done, had this been an useless ceremony, or if Philip, or any one under an Apostle, could have done it. So that this instance is of itself sufficient to prove that this was an act peculiar to the Apostolical office; and that our Saviour, according to His promise, was really present at the performance of it, seeing the Apostles had no sooner laid their hands upon them, but they immediately received the Holy Ghost. Another instance of the

Acts 8. 17.

same nature we find, where St. Paul, being at Ephesus, and finding some disciples there baptized only with the baptism of John; he laid his hands upon them, and so they received the Holy Ghost. Acts 19. 6.

Hence the Catholic Church, in all ages, hath not only retained this Apostolical rite, which we now call *Confirmation*, but hath always esteemed it an essential part of the Apostolical office, and therefore to be performed by none but the Apostles themselves and their successors to the end of the world. And therefore it was the ancient and constant custom of the primitive Church, as it is ours, for the Bishop of every diocese to go into the lesser cities and villages belonging to him, and there lay his hands upon those who were baptized by Priests or Deacons, that they might receive the Holy Ghost, as we learn from St. Hierom himself, whose words are, *Non abnuo hanc esse Ecclesiarum consuetudinem, ut ad eos, qui* [*longè in*] *minoribus urbibus per Presbyteros et Diaconos baptizati sunt, Episcopus ad invocationem Sancti Spiritûs manum impositurus excurrat.* [Hieron. adv. Luciferian. tom. iv. par. 2. p. 295.]

And therefore, how any Bishops in our days dare neglect so considerable a part of their office, I know not; but fear they will have no good account to give of it when they come to stand before our Lord's tribunal. And as for others, who, contrary to the practice of the primitive Christians, either refuse or neglect confirmation, when they may have it administered to them, they have just cause to suspect that they have no good sense of religion, nor regard for the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit: for if they had, they would use all means for the attainment thereof; especially this, which hath been found effectual for that end by the Catholic and Apostolic Church, in all ages, where persons have been duly prepared for it: our Lord being, according to His promise in my text, always present at the performance of this, as well as of any other part of the Apostolical office.

There is one thing still behind, which we must by no means omit, especially upon this occasion; and that is, the power of governing the Church, which our Lord left with His Apostles and their successors, to the end of the world; but so that He, according to His promise, is always present with them at the execution of it. For this power is granted

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to them in the very charter to which this promise is annexed: For here our Lord gives them commission not only to baptize, but likewise to teach those who are His disciples, to observe whatsoever He had commanded. Whereby they are impowered both to declare what are those commands of Christ which men ought to observe, and also to use all means to prevail upon men to observe them: Such as are, correcting and punishing those who violate, rewarding and encouraging those who keep them. But our Saviour's kingdom being, as Himself saith, not of this world, but purely spiritual, He hath authorised His substitutes in the government of it, to use rewards and punishments of the same nature; even to admonish delinquents in His Name to forsake their sins, and if they continue obstinate, and neglect such admonitions, to excommunicate or cast them out of His Church; and, upon their repentance, to absolve and receive them in again. This power our Saviour first promised to St. Peter, and in him to the rest of the Apostles. But it was not actually conferred upon them, till after His resurrection, when, having breathed, He said unto them, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." As if he should have said, I, the Son of Man, having power upon earth also to forgive sins, do now commit the same to you; so that whose sins soever are remitted or retained by you, are so by Me also. From whence it is plain, both that the Apostles received power to remit and retain sins, and that Christ himself concurs with them in the exercise of that power; and how He doth it, even by His Holy Spirit now breathed into them.

Matt. 16. 19.

John 20. 23.

To explain the full extent and latitude of this power, would require more time than can be allowed upon this day, whereon 'tis to be exercised: And, therefore, I shall observe only two things concerning it; whereof the *first* is, That how great soever the power be, which our Lord committed to His Apostles and their successors, for the government of His Church in all ages, it is but ministerial; they act only under Him as His ministers and stewards, and must one day give an account to Him of all their actions. Yea, whatsoever power they have of this nature, it is still His power in their

hands; they derive it continually from Him, who is always present with them. And therefore, as they themselves need to have a care how they exert this power, or neglect the exerting of it; so others had need to take care too, that they neither resist nor despise it.

The other thing I would observe unto you, is, That for the better execution of this power, it hath been the constant custom of the Apostles and their successors in all ages, to visit the Churches committed to their charge; to inquire into the faith and manners, both of the clergy and laity that are under them; and to use so much of their authority, and give such orders as they found necessary for the due observation of their Lord's commands. Thus we find the Apostles frequently visiting the Churches they had planted; and St. Paul particularly keeping a solemn visitation at Miletus, where he sent for the Elders of Ephesus, and of all Asia (as Irenæus affirms, and the context itself proves), and summoned them to appear before him there, where he gave them many Apostolical admonitions and directions, how to feed the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. Afterwards, we find it recorded in Ecclesiastical History, that St. John often visited the Asiatic Churches, as his peculiar province. And I do not question, but where we read of Pinytus bishop of Gnossus, and Dionysius of Alexandria, laying their commands upon their clergy, in the first ages of the Church, it was at such a visitation as this. And we cannot doubt of St. Cyprian's care in this particular, so long as he resided upon his bishopric, seeing that in his very recess, when he was forced to retire, he visited them, as himself saith, by his letters, sending several both to the clergy and laity, still extant in his works; wherein he sometimes reproves, sometimes admonishes and directs them how to carry and behave themselves in that juncture.

[Iren. adv. Hæres. iii. c.14.p.235.]

Acts 20. 28.

[Cyp. Ep. 20. Presb. et Diac. Rom. p. 42. Cf. Ep. v.-xliii. ed. Amst.]

Indeed, this is so necessary to the discharging of the Episcopal or Apostolical office, that it cannot be imagined that ever any conscientious Bishop durst neglect it. Insomuch, that for several ages after the Apostles, we have no ecclesiastical law or Canon, as I remember, about Episcopal visitations; because there was no need of them till about the sixth or seventh century, when there were several canons made

[Concil. Arelat. A.D. 813. Canon xvii. ap. Hardouin. tom. iv. p. 1005.]

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concerning the time and manner of keeping them; as the sixth council at Arles decreed, that every Bishop should go about his diocese once every year. Ivo quotes an ancient canon of the second council at Seville, that every Bishop shall once a year go about his diocese, and confirm and teach the people. The second council at Braga in Portugal, decreed, That Bishops, in their visitations, should instruct their clergy how to administer the Sacrament. The fourth at Toledo, That they shall then inquire into the fabric of their several Churches, and examine what repairs they wanted. Another at Augusta Vindelicorum, or Augsburg, as some think, as others at Ratisbon in Germany, decreed, That when the Bishop goes about his diocese to confirm the people, the Presbyters shall be always ready to attend him. There are several other canons, enjoining Bishops to visit at least once a year, and directing them what to do at their visitations; but none, that I know of, that they shall visit in general: the Church taking it for granted all along, that no Bishop would totally omit so necessary a part of his duty, but would some time, and after some manner or other, visit the diocese that belonged to him: which certainly none can choose but do, who considers either the account he must one day give of his stewardship, or the encouragement our Lord Himself has given him to do it, in that He hath promised to be always with him in the discharge of his office; saying to His Apostles and their successors for ever, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

[Ivo. Lib. Decret. part. V. de Sublimitat. Episcop. cap. 189. p. 174. ed. Lovan. 1561.]

[2 Concil. Bracarense. A.D. 572. Canon i. ap. Hard. Tom. iii. p. 386.]

[4 Concil. Tolet. A.D. 633. v. cap. 36. ap. Hard. Tom. iii. p. 587.]

[Cf. Caroli Magni Select. Capitul. Eccles. in Concil. Ratispon. cap. 32.]

Now the promises being duly weighed, even that our Lord Himself is always present by His Holy Spirit with His Apostles and their successors in the execution of the Apostolical office; many useful inferences might be thence deduced. I shall instance in some few, which, I hope, will not be altogether unworthy of your consideration at this time.

Hence therefore, in the first place, I observe, how much we are all bound to acknowledge the goodness, to praise, magnify, and adore the Name of the Most High God, in that we were born and bred, and still live in a Church, wherein the Apostolical line hath through all ages been preserved entire, there having been a constant succession of such Bishops in it, as were truly and properly successors to the

Apostles, by virtue of that Apostolical imposition of hands; which being begun by the Apostles, hath been continued from one to another, ever since their time, down to ours. By which means, the same Spirit which was breathed by our Lord into His Apostles, is, together with their office, transmitted to their lawful successors, the Pastors and Governors of our Church at this time; and acts, moves, and assists at the administration of the several parts of the Apostolical office in our days, as much as ever. From whence it follows, that the means of grace, which we now enjoy, are in themselves as powerful and effectual as they were in the Apostles' days. And if they prove not always so successful now as they were then, that cannot be imputed to any want of efficacy in them, but to some defect or other in those who use them. For they who are duly prepared cannot but always find the same effect from them, because there is always the same cause, even the Spirit of God moving upon His Word and Sacraments, when administered by our Church, as well as when administered by the Apostles, to whom it was first given.

And here it may not be amiss to observe, what I have often thought of, not without admiration, how strangely the spirit of the Apostles hath run through our Church, all along, ever since the Reformation, diffusing itself from the head, which first received it, into all her real members; as may easily be seen, not only in the discipline of our Church, but likewise in its doctrine, manner of worship, patience under sufferings, universal charity, and particularly in its loyalty and submission to the civil magistrate; which the Apostles, assisted by the Spirit of God, did not only press upon others, but practised themselves. And the same Spirit hath enabled our Church constantly to do the same: insomuch, that malice itself could never fasten any thing of rebellion upon our Church, as now constituted, nor upon any of her members that lived faithfully in her communion. Many of them have suffered imprisonment, sequestration—yea, martyrdom itself, as the Apostles did; and yet all have been as free from rebellion and treason as they were: which to me is a great instance of the same Spirit still working in our Church which wrought so effectually upon them.

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And this I verily believe is the great reason why the devil hath such a spite at our Church, still stirring up adversaries of all sorts against it,—Papists on the one hand, and Sectaries on the other, and all, if possible, to destroy it: even because the Spirit, which is ministered in it, is so contrary to his nature, and so destructive of his kingdom, that he can never expect to domineer and tyrannise over the people of the land, so long as such a Church is settled among them, and they continue firm to it. And therefore, seeing he cannot, by all his secret plots and contrivances, totally overthrow it, he still uses the utmost of his skill and power to draw as many as he can from its communion, and so make them schismatics; that so being separated from the body, they may not partake of the Spirit that is in it, nor, by consequence, receive any benefit from this promise of our blessed Saviour to the Governors of His Catholic and Apostolic Church in all ages, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

The next thing I would observe unto you, from what we have now discoursed of, concerns us of the Clergy, who are entrusted with any part of the Apostolical office. For being ordained by those who succeeded the Apostles in a direct line, by the imposition of their hands upon us, we received not only power to administer the Word and Sacraments, but likewise the Spirit of Christ to accompany and influence such administrations—by whom, therefore, Christ Himself is always present with us whensoever, we are employed in the work that He hath set us. Which consideration, methinks, should strike an awe and terror into us, and make us dread the thoughts of doing the work of our Lord negligently. And therefore, whether we minister unto Him in the public *Liturgy* of our Church, read or preach His Holy Word, or administer His blessed Sacraments, let us all be persuaded to have an especial care that we do it, not after a careless or perfunctory manner, but with all that reverence and godly fear—with that earnestness and devotion—with that seriousness and intention of mind, as becomes those who believe that our Lord Himself is always present with us, not only to take notice of what we do, but to bless and sanctify it to the salvation of men's immortal souls.

Hence, also, it concerns us all to carry and behave ourselves at all times, to the utmost of our power, as becometh the ministers of Christ; to whom the Eternal Son of God hath vouchsafed so high an honour, as not only to employ us in His own immediate service, but likewise to reside Himself continually with us. And therefore, seeing He is pleased to honour us with His own presence, let us endeavour to honour Him too, by walking in holiness and righteousness before Him all the days of our life. Especially, let us take all the care we can to avoid whatsoever is offensive to Him, or unworthy of that high and heavenly calling in which He hath placed us. It is true the efficacy of the Word and Sacraments is not impeded by the wickedness or unworthiness of him by whom they are administered, as our Church hath rightly determined; because that depends not upon the person but the office, and Christ's promise to it. But howsoever, it behoves us, who attend continually upon Him, to walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless; lest otherwise we bring a scandal upon our profession, and give too much occasion to the enemies of our Lord to blaspheme His most sacred Name: especially considering what a sad and dismal thing it would be if we, who are employed by Christ to persuade others to obey His Gospel, should not obey it ourselves, and so not save ourselves as well as those that hear us; but be instruments in God's hand to bring others to Heaven, and yet we ourselves be cast down to hell: which is not only possible, but impossible to be avoided, unless we look very narrowly to ourselves. I am sure St. Paul thought so, and therefore saith, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway." And if so great an Apostle was forced to take so much pains with himself, lest when he had preached salvation unto others, he himself should not attain it, what cause have you and I to do so? But our comfort is, that our Lord is always present with us, and therefore we can never want assistance from Him, if we be not first wanting to ourselves.

[Luke 1. 6.]

1 Cor. 9. 27.

Hoping therefore, that this consideration of Christ's promise to us will have its desired effect upon us of the Clergy, I shall, in the next place, shew what use others also may,

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and ought to make of it: and for that end shall apply myself unto you all. Seeing therefore that our Lord hath promised to be with His Apostles and their successors to the end of the world — seeing the succession of the office Apostolical hath, without interruption, been continued in our Church to this day — and seeing therefore that Christ, according to His promise, is always present by His Holy Spirit at the Word and Sacraments, as administered by our Church, to quicken, actuate, and make them effectual to the salvation of our souls: hence, in His Name, and for His Sake, and your own too, I humbly pray and beseech you all, that you would take all the opportunities you can, to meet your Lord and Saviour in the public offices of the Church, to which He hath thus promised His peculiar presence. And think it not enough to be there, but consider all the while in whose presence you are, and deport yourselves accordingly. And while we read or preach the Gospel, call upon you, exhort and pray you to observe whatsoever Christ hath commanded; still remember

2 Cor. 5. 20.

the Apostle's words, that "we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." And therefore receive it, not as the word of man, but as it is, indeed, the Word of God Himself.

Above all things, take heed that you have not men's persons in admiration, so as to think the Word and Sacraments one jot the better or worse, because administered by one person rather than another. For they that do so, it is evident, regard the person more than the office; and then it is no wonder if they receive no benefit or advantage from it. For all the hopes and expectations that we have or can have, from the exercise of any Ecclesiastical office, by whomsoever performed, are grounded only upon Christ's promise to the office itself, to be present with it by His Holy Spirit; without which, all the fine words and phrases in the world can never mortify one lust, nor convert one soul to God and goodness. And therefore ye, whensoever you address yourselves to the public prayers of our Church, to hear God's Word read or preached, or to receive the Holy Sacrament, still keep the eye of your faith fixed upon Christ, as there really present, according to His promise, ready to dispense

His heavenly blessings by His Holy Spirit, working together with the ordinance, to make it accomplish the end of its institution, even your sanctification in this world and your eternal salvation in the world to come. Do but observe these few rules in all your solemn devotions, as performed by that part of the Catholic Church which, by the blessing of Almighty God, is settled amongst you; and then I dare assure you, in the Name of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ, that you will all experience the truth of what you have now heard, even that Christ is always present with His Apostles, in the discharge of their office, to the end of the world.

Moreover, from the premises duly weighed, you may all very easily observe, what reason you all have to continue steadfast in the communion of our Church, wherein the Word and Sacraments are so powerfully and effectually administered, and not to deviate from her, either into Popery on the one hand, or Schism on the other. For, as to Popery, although we do not deny but that the Apostolical succession hath been continued in the Church of Rome, yet we cannot but affirm also that they have made very bad use of it, or, rather, have most egregiously abused it: having clogged the several offices with so many superstitious ceremonies that they quench the Spirit which should enflame and quicken them, or else perform them so imperfectly and irregularly, that they are not the same that were instituted by Christ, and so not capable of having this promise fulfilled to them. I shall instance only in two,—the reading of the Scriptures, and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

As for the first, the public and solemn reading of the Word of God by a minister of Christ, lawfully ordained and appointed thereunto, I look upon it as a thing of much greater consequence than it is commonly thought to be: yea, I cannot but reckon it amongst the most useful and prevalent means of grace that we do or can enjoy. For although it be our duty to read the Scriptures in private, which I hope you all do, yet none of you but may find by experience that a chapter once read in public, as before described, is of greater force, and makes deeper impressions upon you, than if you run it ten times over by yourselves.

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And the reason is, because the same Spirit which indited the Scriptures accompanies such solemn reading of them, and sets it home upon the hearts and consciences of them that hear it. So that, besides the majesty and authority that appears in the Scriptures themselves, as they are the very Word of God, much more than any exposition of them can be; there is likewise, at such a time, the power and efficacy of the Spirit of Christ then present, to press and enforce it upon the minds of all such as duly attend to the reading of them. But now, in the Church of Rome, all this is lost. For although they read the Scriptures indeed, yet they read them as they do their prayers, in an unknown tongue, at least to the greatest part of the congregation, and commonly to the very reader himself. By which means the people are deprived, not only of the Scriptures themselves, but likewise of the assistance of God's Spirit, which otherwise would accompany the reading of them. For as they order the matter, the Spirit of God Himself cannot make His own Word effectual to their salvation without a miracle. He must first give them the gift of tongues, and make them understand a language they never learned, before it is possible for Him to make His own Word of any use or advantage to them. For He never works upon our minds but in a way suitable to our natures, as we are rational creatures, so as first to clear up our apprehensions of the good He propounds to us, and so incline our wills to the embracement of it. But where the Word of God is propounded in an unknown tongue, it is impossible for the people to have any apprehensions of it at all, for the Spirit of God to work upon, and to clear up so as to influence the will by them. By which means the Word of God itself is made of little or no effect to those who live in the communion of that Church.

The same reason holds good also as to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as administered by the Romish Church. For the whole office belonging to it is wrapped up in a language the people do not understand, and therefore know not what the priest saith, nor whether he consecrates the Host or no; only they see him perform a great many ceremonies as unintelligible as the language he speaks, and at length he puts a wafer into their mouths. Now, what is there in all

this that the Spirit of God can make use of to the comfort and edification of the people? especially considering that the priest intends not to minister the Spirit of Christ unto them, but only His real body, as they are bound to believe the wafer to be. But if it was possible, as it neither is nor can be, to convert the bread into the body of Christ, and give it to the people, what good could that do them, if abstracted from the Spirit? For, as our Lord Himself saith, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing." John 6. 63. But, after all this, I do not see how the promise of the Spirit can belong to the Sacrament, as they manage it. For the promise is made not to any one part of it as distinct from the other, but to the whole, as it was instituted by Christ. And where the institution is not rightly observed, neither can the promise annexed to it be performed. But it is plain that our Saviour instituted the cup as well as the bread; and it is as plain that the Church of Rome administers the bread only, and not the cup. And therefore they, by depriving the people of one half of the Communion, do thereby deprive them of the comfort and benefit of the whole.

And therefore were there no other, as there are many arguments to deter sober and considering men from the communion of that Church, this, one would think, is of itself sufficient to do it; even because those great means of grace, the Word and Sacrament itself, are so administered by it as to be made of no use at all to the people.

And as for Schism, they certainly hazard their salvation at a strange rate, who separate themselves from such a Church as ours is, wherein the Apostolical succession, the root of all Christian communion, hath been so entirely preserved, and the Word and Sacraments are so effectually administered; and all to go into such assemblies and meetings, as can have no pretence to the great promise in my text. For it is manifest that this promise was made only to the Apostles and their successors to the end of the world. Whereas in the private meetings, where their teachers have no Apostolical or Episcopal imposition of hands, they have no ground to pretend to succeed the Apostles, nor, by consequence, any right to the Spirit which our Lord here promiseth; without which, although they preach their hearts

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out, I do not see what spiritual advantage can accrue to their hearers by it. And therefore, whatsoever they may think of it, for my own part, I would not be without this promise of our Saviour for all the world, as knowing, that not only myself, but the whole Catholic Church, is highly concerned in it; it being by virtue of this promise that the Church is continually acted, guided, and assisted by the Spirit of God, and so the ordinary means of grace are made effectual to salvation, which otherwise would be of no force or efficacy at all. And therefore to speak modestly, they must needs run a very great hazard who cut themselves off from ours, and, by consequence, from the Catholic Church, and so render themselves uncapable of receiving any benefit from this promise, or from the means of grace which they do or may enjoy.

Upon these, therefore, and such like considerations, which this text will readily suggest to your serious and more retired thoughts, I humbly advise and beseech you all in the Name of Christ your Saviour, and as you do tender your salvation by Him, that you would not hearken unto those who go about to seduce you from our Church, but that you would continue firm and faithful to it. For so long as you do so, I dare undertake for you that you are in the ready way to Heaven. But if you once forsake that, whither you will next go, I know not; no, nor you neither.

But when I speak of your continuing firm and faithful to our Church, I do not mean that you should only talk high for her, much less inveigh against her adversaries, or damn all those who are not of her communion; for this is contrary to the Divine and Apostolical spirit that is in her, which is a spirit of meekness, and soberness, and charity. But my meaning is, that you firmly believe whatsoever she, from the Word of God, propounds as an article of faith, and faithfully perform whatsoever she, from the same Word, requires as a necessary duty to God or man; and, by consequence, so live in the communion of our Church, as to live up to the rules and constitutions of it.

And oh! that all we who are here present, and all that profess to be of our Church, wheresoever they are, would for the future do so! What an holy, what an happy people

should we then be! How pious towards God, how loyal to our sovereign, how just and charitable towards all men! This would be the way to convince our adversaries of their errors and mistakes, when they see how far we excel them in virtue and good works; and this would be the way too, to secure our Church against all the attempts that men or devils can make upon her. For then our Lord Himself would delight to dwell amongst us, and be always present with us, not only by His Spirit, but likewise by His power too. And if He be with us, we need not fear what flesh can [Ps. 56. 4.] do against us; so that we may lay it down as a most certain truth that our Church can never be destroyed but by itself. For if we do not first fail of performing our duty unto Him, be sure Christ will never fail of performing His promise unto us. But how proud, how malicious soever our adversaries are, and whatsoever designs they may carry on against us, He that sitteth in the Heavens will laugh them to scorn, [Ps. 2. 4.] our Lord will have them in derision: He will abate their pride, assuage their malice, or else confound their devices, so as to make them fall themselves into the same pit that they dig for others. And notwithstanding all their endeavours to the contrary, He will settle our Church upon such foundations that the gates of hell itself shall never be able [Matt. 16. 18.] to prevail against it. Neither will He only continue His Church to us, but likewise His Spirit to our Church, so as always to perform this promise in my text, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Amen.

O blessed Jesu! thou eternal Son of God; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be everlasting honour, praise, and glory, from this time forth and for evermore.

SERMON II.

THE INSTITUTION OF MINISTERS.

Acts i. 26.

And they gave forth their lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.

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This portion of Scripture, appointed for the Epistle this day, suits as well with the work that is to be now done, as it doth with the day for which it is appointed. It is appointed for the Feast of St. Matthias, whose memory we this day celebrate; of whom we have read, that he was taken into the number of Apostles in the Church of Christ. And there are several persons here present to be ordained now into the sacred ministry of the same Church whereof he was ordained an Apostle. And therefore I shall not insist upon the words themselves, but I shall take occasion from hence to discourse of Ordination in general, under which that of St. Matthias in particular will come in of course.

Now, by Ordination in general, I mean the setting apart some certain persons to direct, govern, assist, and influence others in the public worship of Almighty God, and to administer such means unto them as He hath appointed for their eternal salvation. Concerning which we shall consider two things:—

I. The necessity of it. And,

II. The way and manner of performing it.

As to the first, we need not say much, it being a thing that mankind in general seems to be agreed in. For as there is no nation in the world, but where they profess some kind of religion or other, so there is no religion professed in the world, but where they have some persons or other set

apart for the celebration of the several rites and ceremonies in it; without which, indeed, it is impossible that any religion should subsist. For if no places were set apart for the worship of God, men would soon worship Him nowhere; if no times, they would never worship Him: so if no persons were set apart for it, none would ever do it at all, at least, not so as they ought.

And if it be so in natural, how much more in revealed religion, of which this seems to be one of the integral or essential parts; without which it is not that religion which God hath revealed. For whensoever He, the great Creator and Governor of the world, hath revealed His will and pleasure to His creatures, how He would have them worship and serve Him that made them; He hath still at the same time constituted certain officers amongst them to assist them in it: which officers being, as it were, His own domestics, or immediate servants or ministers, waiting continually upon Himself and His service, He always hath reserved to Himself the constitution or ordination of them; not suffering any one that had a mind to it to meddle with any thing belonging to the said offices, without His leave and order first obtained. And if any presume to do it, He doth not only make what they do void and of no effect, but He punisheth them severely for it; as we find by many instances in Holy Scripture.

Hence the Apostle saith, "No man taketh this honour unto himself but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." That is, no man can be really a priest, a minister of God, as Aaron was, but such as are called and constituted by God Himself, as he was. And they that do undertake the said ministry without such a call, whatsoever they may fancy or pretend, they are not God's ministers: and therefore all they do is in vain, and to no purpose, as the Apostle saith elsewhere; "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" They may speak the same words, deliver the same truths, press the same duties as they do who are really God's ministers, but this is not preaching, properly so called: they do not publish and proclaim the will of God with any power or authority over their hearers, for they have received none from God, as not being called and sent by Him.

Heb. 5. 4.

Rom. 10. 15.

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This the Apostles and first Disciples of our blessed Saviour were so sensible of, that when they wanted an Apostle, although there were doubtless many excellent persons among them that might think themselves fit for the place, yet none of them would undertake it of their own heads; but they all, with one accord, left it to Almighty God to determine and declare whom He had chosen and called to it: who having, by His disposal of the lots they cast, accordingly acquainted them that Matthias was the person He pitched upon, he was presently numbered with the Apostles.

But all this will appear more clearly under the second head, which I design principally to consider; and that is, the way and manner whereby God hath been pleased to ordain and set apart persons for His own service and ministry. In speaking to which, I shall not trouble you with any conjectures how this was done in the Church before Moses's time, but shall begin there, where we have a certain rule to walk by.

In the day, therefore, that the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, He sanctified to Himself all the first-
Num. 3. 13. born among the children of Israel. But afterwards, instead
Ver. 12. of them, He took one whole tribe, even the tribe of Levi, they being about the same number with the first-born of all Israel. For all the males of the tribe of Levi, from a month old and upwards, were numbered 22,000; and all the first-born of the males among the children of Israel were 22,273. So that all the first-born males of Israel were only 273 more than the Levites; which odd number being redeemed at five shekels a-piece by the poll, the whole tribe of Levi was from thenceforward set apart to be employed wholly in the
Num. 3. 3. service of God, instead of all the first-born in Israel. And out of this tribe He chose one family, even that of Aaron, to minister continually to Him in the priest's office; to burn incense, to slay and offer sacrifices, to instruct the people in His law, and the like. And out of this family He chose Aaron himself; and so the first-born of that family all along to be His high-priest: to whom He appointed not only the oversight of all the rest, but likewise some certain offices which no other priests or Levites could meddle with.

So that we here have three distinct orders of men, settled

and established by God Himself to minister unto Him,—the high-priest, the priests, and the Levites. Which last, in Moses's time, were employed wholly about the tabernacle and the vessels belonging to it; but, when the temple was built, they were also made treasurers, and judges, and porters, and singers. 1 Chron. 23. 4, 5.

Now, God having thus constituted these several orders of men for His own service, He gave directions how they should be all consecrated to their several offices. First, Aaron by himself, as the high-priest; then his sons, as the second or ordinary priests; and afterwards the Levites. By which consecration, not only the persons then in being, but their posterity, were all ordained into the same offices that they themselves were. By Aaron's ordination into the office of high-priest, the first-born, or eldest sons of his family, were ordained so too. By his son's consecration, all their sons, or the younger sons of that family, were ordained priests. And so for the Levites, when they were consecrated, all the males that should ever proceed from them were consecrated together with them, as being then contained in their loins. So that, although there might be some certain ceremonies used at their entering upon the execution of their office, when they came to years of discretion, yet they were not properly ordained or consecrated again; but the office came to them in course, or, if you will, *ex traduce:* the Ordination, which their ancestors had from God Himself, being, by virtue of this institution and command, propagated and derived down to them. And thus it continued all along during the Mosaic dispensation, which was about 2000 years, even until the death of our blessed Saviour; which, being typified and foreshewn by the sacrifices which these priests offered, the priesthood itself must needs continue in force and virtue till that was accomplished. Lev. 8. Num. 8.

And therefore all the while that Christ lived, He made no alteration at all in it, neither did He ever properly abrogate or repeal the laws that were formerly made about it, but when He died they expired together with Him; both the time and the end for which they were made being now accomplished. But from that time forward, though the Jewish nation still continued till the destruction of Hierusalem,

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which was forty years after, yet they had not really any priesthood among them; the time for which it was ordained being now expired.

When our Lord therefore was upon earth, foreseeing that all the Mosaic orders would cease, in course, upon His death, and knowing that His Church could never subsist without some such orders of men set apart for the administration of His Word and Sacraments; before He died, He took care to lay the platform of others, suitable to His own religion. For which purpose, out of the many Disciples that followed Him,

Matt. 10. He first chose twelve Apostles; to whom He gave commission to baptize, to preach the Gospel, and to work miracles for the confirmation of it. And afterwards He sent out

Luke 10. seventy other Disciples, and gave them power also to preach the Gospel and cast out devils in His Name. So that He still kept up the same number of orders in His Church, whilst Himself lived, that was in the Jewish Church; for He Himself was truly the High Priest, of whom they, under the law, were only types. Then there were the twelve Apostles, answerable to the Priests of the second order; and the seventy Disciples, resembling the great number of Levites.

But all this while we do not read that the Apostles had any solemn consecration to their office during our Saviour's life. It is said, indeed, in Mark iii. 14, that He ordained twelve; but the words are, ἐποίησε δώδεκα, He made or appointed twelve to be His Apostles or messengers. But we do not find that He ordained them, so as to confer any Sacerdotal power upon them. He promised indeed St. Peter, and the rest of the Apostles with him, that He would give

Matt. 16. 19. them the keys of the kingdom of Heaven. But they were as yet in the hands of the Levitical priesthood; and He would not take them from thence to give them to His Apostles so long as that priesthood continued in force. But He was no sooner dead and risen again, but He presently performed His promise. For then the Levitical priesthood being expired, and, by consequence, the keys, which He had before committed to it by His servant Moses, returning, in course, into His own hands, He then, according to His promise, gave them to His Apostles.

For upon the same day that He rose again in the evening, His Apostles being met together, He came to them, and said to them, "Peace be unto you: as My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said so, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesover sins ye retain, they are retained." "As My Father sent Me, even so I send you;" that is, as My Father sent Me to preach the Gospel, by anointing Me with His Holy Spirit, even so, after the self-same manner, I send you. "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" at the speaking of which words He breathed upon them, and so issued forth the Holy Spirit from Himself into them. Which, as it is an undeniable argument of the Spirit's procession from the Son as well as from the Father; so it was the highest and truest Consecration of the Apostles that could be, far beyond that of Aaron and his sons. For they were anointed only with material ointment, which was poured upon Aaron's head, and sprinkled afterwards upon his and his sons' garments, together with the blood of the sacrifice. But this was only a type of that Holy Spirit wherewith the Apostles were anointed by our Lord, when He breathed it immediately from Himself into them.

John 20. 21-23.

Isa. 61. 1. Luke 4. 18.

Levit. 8. 12.

Ver. 30.

And now were the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, according to the promise before mentioned, given to the Apostles. And therefore our Lord, after He had breathed upon them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost," presently adds, "whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Whereby all Sacerdotal power was now conferred upon the Apostles, even whatsoever is necessary to the government and edification of the Church, to the world's end. And therefore, immediately before His ascension, the eleven Apostles being met together again, in the place that He appointed them, our Lord goes to them again, and saith, "All power is given to Me, both in Heaven and earth: go ye therefore, and make all nations My disciples, by baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo! I am with you alway,

[Matt. 28. 18-20.]

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even unto the end of the world." That is, I, by My Holy Spirit, which I have breathed into you, am now with you; and so I am always with you and your successors to the end of the world.

Now the Apostles being thus solemnly ordained and consecrated by Christ Himself, and having received so ample a commission from Him; soon after His ascension into Heaven, they, with some other Disciples, met together, and consulted how to fill up their number again: for Judas Iscariot, who was one of the twelve, by betraying his Master had lost both his office and his life, and another was now to take his Bishopric, or Apostleship, according to the prophecy in the Book of Psalms, which St. Peter put them in mind of. And therefore they all agree to have the number made up again out of these, who had, like the other Apostles, been conversant with our blessed Saviour all along, from first to last. And they found two considerable persons among them who had been so,—Joseph, surnamed Justus, and Matthias; both, in their apprehensions, equally qualified for the place; yet, nevertheless, they would not undertake to choose either of them. Forasmuch as they themselves having been chosen by Christ Himself, it was not fit to take any into their number but whom Christ Himself had chosen; and therefore they resolved to refer it wholly unto Him.

[Ps. 109. 8.] [Acts 1. 20.]

But how could that be done, now that Christ was gone from them into Heaven? There was no other way but to cast lots, which should be the person—a way that had been commonly used in such cases. For, by the command of God Himself, lots were cast upon the two goats, which should be the Lord's and which should be the scape-goat. The land of Canaan was divided among the twelve tribes by lot. Saul was chosen king of Israel by lot. The several ministrations and charges of the Priests were divided amongst them by lot. There are many such instances in the Old Testament of referring doubtful cases to God's decision, by casting lots upon them; for, as the Wise Man saith, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord."

Lev. 16. 8. Josh. 18. 6. 1 Sam. 10. 21. 1 Chron. 24. 5. Prov. 16. 33.

This course, therefore, the Apostles took, to know which of these two persons our Lord would have taken into their number; but before they cast their lots they first address

themselves in a more solemn manner to Christ Himself, saying, "Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two Thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and Apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place." Where we may observe, they do not pray that our Lord would choose one now, but that He would shew whether of the two he had chosen already; for so the words run, ἐκ τούτων τῶν δύω ἕνα ὃν ἐξελέξω, which one of these two Thou hast chosen,—as supposing that He had chosen one of them already, though they did not know which. And therefore, when they had cast lots, and the lot was fallen upon Matthias, they took it for granted, as they well might, that he was the person whom Christ had before chosen to be one of their number; and therefore, without any more ado, "he was numbered with the eleven Apostles," so as to make up the number of twelve again.

But here it may be asked, how this Matthias should be an Apostle of equal power with the other, seeing he was not present when the other were ordained by our Saviour and received the Spirit from Him? I answer, that the same doubt may be made concerning St. Thomas, for neither was he present when our Lord breathed His Holy Spirit upon His other Apostles; and yet none ever denied but that he was an Apostle of equal authority with those that were then present. And indeed the question concerning both may be clearly answered by a parallel case: for we read how that when Moses had, by appointment of God, chosen seventy of the elders of Israel to be endowed with His Spirit, and had ordered them to go to the tabernacle of the congregation, "the Lord came down in a cloud, and spake unto him, and took of the Spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders; and it came to pass, that when the Spirit rested upon them, they prophesied, and did not cease. But two of the seventy remained in the camp, Eldad and Medad;" and though they were not present, "the Spirit rested upon them" also, and they prophesied as well as the other. And this remark is put upon them, that "they were of them that were written, but went not to the tabernacle." The case is the self same here; for, as Eldad

Num. 11.

Num. 11. 25, 26.

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and Medad, being chosen by Moses into the number of the seventy, received the same Spirit which was given to the other sixty-eight, although they were present at the place where the Lord came down in the cloud to them; so here, Thomas and Matthias being in the number of the twelve which were chosen by our Lord to be His Apostles, although they were not present at the place where our Lord gave the Holy Spirit to the other ten, yet they received it as effectually to all intents and purposes as the other did. For wheresoever they were, the Holy Ghost breathed upon the Apostles as such, rested upon them also, because they also were chosen into the number of Apostles, even Matthias himself, as I observed before.

This formal admission of St. Matthias into the number of the Apostles, was upon one of the ten days between the ascension of our Lord to Heaven, and the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the day of Pentecost. And then was fulfilled what our Saviour had promised His Apostles, saying, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of Truth," which therefore is called another Comforter, because he was to supply our Saviour's place and presence upon earth; guide His Apostles into all truth, and direct, assist, and order the affairs of His Church until His coming again. And therefore it was, that now, upon the day of Pentecost, He made, as it were, His public entrance into the Church, appearing visibly to the Disciples, and enabling them to speak all manner of languages, in order to the conversion of all nations to the faith of Christ.

Acts 2.

John 14, 16.

Now this Holy Spirit of Christ, having thus taken upon Him this office, to shew that he could and would do for the Church whatsoever our Saviour Himself either would or could, was He still present in person, as well as by this His Spirit: hence, as He had chosen twelve Apostles, His Spirit chooses two other in as plain and apparent a manner as Christ himself had done it. For there being "certain Prophets and Teachers in the Church at Antioch, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius, Manaen, and Saul, as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called

Acts 13. 1, 2.

them." From whence we may observe, that he had before this called them to the work; and now he expressly commands the Prophets and Teachers there present, to separate, or set them apart for it. He did not employ the Apostles that were consecrated by our Lord to do it, that their consecration might appear to be wholly from Himself; and so the Church might rest fully satisfied, that although our Saviour, the head of it, be gone to Heaven, yet He hath still, and always will have one upon earth, that can exercise His power so effectually, that He Himself may be truly said to be always with it, as He said He would. But howsoever, notwithstanding that He Himself had called them, yet He would have them publicly ordained by the persons before mentioned, supposed to be the Bishops of Syria, to shew that whatsoever call from Him any should afterwards pretend to, yet He would never employ them in His work and ministry, until they were publicly ordained, and separated for it, by the governors of the Church empowered by Him to do it. And then He would have it done too by the Imposition of hands, to shew that this was the way that He had appointed for it. For it is said, that "when they had Ver. 3.
fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away," or as the word ἀπέλυσαν signifies, they dismissed them, or let them depart; for they were not properly sent by them, but by the Holy Ghost, as it is expressly said in the following words. So then they being sent forth, ἐκπεμφθέντες, were sent forth by the Holy Ghost; and as the twelve were sent by Christ, so were these two, Barnabas and Saul, sent by His Holy Spirit, and so were as truly His Apostles as the other. And therefore one of them, even Saul, otherwise called Paul, is not only called an Apostle of Jesus Christ, but saith expressly that he was so, "not of men, nor by Gal. 1. 1.
man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father," because he was thus sent by the Holy Ghost Himself, the same God with the Father and the Son.

From whence we may observe, by the way, upon what good grounds the last revisers of the Common Prayer added two new holydays in the calendar, which had been omitted in the former editions, even the conversion of St. Paul, and St. Barnabas's day; for these being Apostles of the same power

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and dignity with the other twelve, there was all the reason in the world that we should commemorate and give God thanks for them as well as for the other. But to distinguish them from the others, the Eves or Vigils of these days are not appointed to be observed, so as those of the others are.

Now the Apostles being all thus ordained and consecrated by Christ's Holy Spirit, they were thereby invested with full power and authority, not only to preach and propagate the [Acts 2. 47.] Gospel, and to add to the Church daily such as should be saved, and to rule and govern the said Church at present; but likewise to institute and establish such officers in it, by whom it may be rightly governed according to our Saviour's mind in all future ages. In order whereunto, the twelve first instituted the office of Deacons, upon occasion of the Grecians murmuring against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. For, it not being fitting that the Apostles themselves should leave the Word to serve tables, they ordered seven men of honest report to be chosen out for that work; which seven being set before the Apostles, they prayed, and then laid their hands Acts 6. 6. on them. By which imposition of hands, they received power, not only to look after the widows and poor; but also to baptize and preach the Gospel. For Stephen, who was one of the seven, was no sooner ordained, but we presently find him preaching so powerfully, that the Jews were not able to Acts 6. 10. resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spake. And Philip, another of the seven, preached Christ so effectually to the Samaritans, that they received the Word gladly, and Acts 8. 38. were baptized of him, and so was the Eunuch too, that was treasurer to Candace, Queen of the Æthiopians. And this office of Deacons, thus instituted by the Apostles, hath continued in the Church ever since, and so must do to the end of the world.

But these Deacons being ordained only to minister in the Church, they could have no share in the government of it; which was the main thing that the Apostles were to take care of: and therefore considering that the Spirit which they had received, must, according to Christ's promise, abide with His Church for ever, it was necessary they should find out some way to transfer it upon others; and so successively

from one to another, to the world's end. Now they found by experience, what they were doubtless directed to by the Holy Ghost Himself, that upon whomsoever they laid their hands, the Holy Ghost presently fell upon them. Thus when Philip, the aforesaid Deacon, had converted and baptized the Samaritans, the Apostles sent Peter and John to them; who having prayed, and laid their hands on them, they received the Holy Ghost. Philip did not so much as offer to lay his hands upon them; and if he had, it would not have done the work, because he was only a Deacon, and none of the Apostles, who had so received the Holy Ghost themselves, as to have power to confer it upon others. As we find St. Paul also did, by laying his hands upon the Disciples at Ephesus.

Acts 8. 17.

Acts 19. 6.

Hence it is, that this power always was, and still is, appropriated only to the Apostles themselves, and their Successors, the Bishops of the Church. And it is that which we now call Confirmation, when a Bishop rightly ordained, after the example of the Holy Apostles, prays for those that are baptized, and lays his hand upon their heads, that they may receive the gifts and graces of God's Holy Spirit, to confirm them in the faith, and in all goodness; which duly performed, is certainly as effectual now as ever, in those who are rightly disposed and qualified for it; as, blessed be God, we find at this very day, to our unspeakable comfort.

The Apostles therefore, finding by experience that the Holy Ghost was given by the laying on of hands, for the confirmation of believers; they could not but conclude this to be a proper way also, for the conferring of it upon those who were to succeed them in the government of the Church. Especially considering, that this was the way whereby Joshua, by the command of God Himself, was constituted the successor of Moses; for Moses laid his hands upon him, by which means the spirit of wisdom came upon him. From whence this rite was commonly used by the Jewish Church, in the constitution of their governors; and the Holy Ghost Himself did not only approve of it, but appointed it to be used in the ordination of Barnabas and Saul. Upon these and the like considerations, the Apostles took this course for the conveying of the Spirit, which they

Numb. 27. 18. 23. Deut. 34. 9.

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had received, to their Successors in all ages. For the way whereby Christ bestowed it upon the twelve, by breathing on them, was proper and peculiar to Himself, from whom the Spirit proceedeth. But this was a way which both they and their Successors in all ages would be capable of: for their [1Cor.6.19] bodies, as well as souls, being made the temples of the Holy Ghost at their Consecration, whensoever they laid their hands upon any person, so as to touch his body, with a design of transferring the same Spirit upon him, it is easy to imagine how such a person comes to be endowed with it: especially, seeing the Holy Ghost had instituted and appointed this to be the way of doing it, and therefore it is impossible it should ever fail. Insomuch, that as the same power which was given to Aaron at his Consecration, was propagated and continued in that Church by successive generation from father to son, so long as the Church itself lasted; so is the same Spirit and Power, which was given to the Apostles at their Consecration, propagated and continued in the Church of Christ, by the successive imposition of hands from one to another, and will be, so long as the world endureth.

This therefore being the method that the holy Apostles, by the direction of the Spirit itself, had agreed upon before their dispersions, wheresoever any of them went, so soon as they had converted any considerable number to the faith, enough to make a Church, before they departed from them, they still laid their hands upon one whom they judged the fittest among them, and so left the same Spirit which they themselves had, with him, for the government and edification of that Church; for whosoever was thus ordained, did by that means receive the Spirit. And therefore, St. Paul having thus ordained Timothy at Ephesus, in 2 Tim. 1. 6. his second epistle to him, he useth these words: "Wherefore I put thee in remembrance, that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee, by the putting on of my hands." And what this gift of God was, he declares in the following words, saying, "For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." As if he should have said, For that Spirit which God hath given us, even me and thee, is not a spirit of fear, but of power, to

instruct and govern the Church; of love, to regulate our passions in the doing it; and of a sound mind, to keep both stedfast in the faith. Plainly implying, that by the laying of his hands upon him, God had given the same Spirit to Timothy, that he himself, the Apostle, had.

But elsewhere, the same Apostle tells Timothy, that this gift was given him by prophecy, "with the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery." From whence it may seem, that some of the elders of the Church joined with St. Paul in laying their hands upon him; and yet St. Paul ascribes it wholly to the laying on of *his* hands, and saith, the gift was given him *by* that, and only *with* the other, because he being the only Apostle that laid on his hands, and so the only person that had power by that means to confer the Holy Spirit, although it was given to him, together *with* the laying on of the other's hands upon him, yet it was not given *by* that, but *by* the laying on of *St. Paul's hands*, as he himself saith. As it is in our Church at this time, and so hath been in the Latin for many ages, in the ordination of a Priest; the Priests there present join with the Bishop in their laying their hands upon him, and yet he is ordained only by the Bishop's laying on his hands. For how many Priests soever lay their hands upon another's head, they can never make him a real Priest, unless there be a Bishop with them; but a Bishop, by the imposition of his hands, can make a Priest, although there be never another Priest with him. Neither doth the law require, that any Priests should be present at such Ordination, but only that the Bishop, with the Priests present (if there happen to be any), shall lay their hands upon him that is to be ordained; the imposition of the Priests' hands being only to signify their consent, that such a person should be received into their order, and so take off the blame from the Bishop, in case he should prove to have been unworthy of it. But still, it is only by the imposition of the Bishop's hands that he is made a Priest, as St. Paul saith, that Timothy received the Spirit, by the laying on of *his* hands, notwithstanding the Presbytery joined with him in it.

1Tim. 4. 14.

But of this, the Spirit's being given by such imposition of hands, so that it is by *Him* principally that the person is

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Chap. 20.

Ver. 28.

ordained, we have a very remarkable instance in the Acts of the Apostles, where we read how St. Paul having ordained many Elders or Bishops in Asia, he summoned them to a Visitation that he held at Miletus, and in the charge he gave them, among other things, he said, "Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," or Bishops. For from hence it appears, that when they were ordained by the imposition of the Apostle's hands, the Holy Ghost so came upon them, that He constituted them in the office they were ordained to: it was *He* that made them Bishops, the Apostle, and whosoever else might join with him in laying on of hands, were only His instruments, the Holy Ghost was the principal agent, and so questionless He is, and always will be, in all such Ordinations. So that all who are regularly ordained, may be truly and properly said to receive their power and commission from the Holy Ghost, that is then conferred upon them, and so from Christ Himself.

Having thus considered the course that the Apostles, by Christ's direction, took and instituted in the Church for the conferring of Holy Orders, so as that they might transfer the same Spirit, which they themselves received, upon those who were admitted into them, and so continue it in the Church for ever; we may further observe, that besides that of Deacons before-mentioned, they found it necessary to establish two other Orders in the Church, to remain through all ages: First, their own, which we now call the Order of Bishops, who are, therefore, by the ancients commonly termed the Apostles' Successors, because that by a successive imposition of hands, continued all along from the Apostles themselves, they receive the same Spirit and Power which the Apostles had, not only for the administration of the Word and Sacraments, but likewise for the government of the Church, and for the conferring of the Holy Spirit by the imposition of their hands, as the Apostles did, both for the confirmation of believers, and likewise for the Ordination of persons into their own and other offices in the Church.

The other Order is that of Priesthood, which being instituted for the due administration of all the ordinary means of grace, it was necessary that they, who were admitted into

this Order also, should have the Holy Ghost, the Fountain of all Grace, conferred upon them, to influence their several administrations, without which it is impossible they should ever attain their end. And hence it is, that according to the practice of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, though not in that of Deacons, yet in the Ordination of Priests, as you will see presently, the Bishop, when he lays his hand severally upon every one that receives that Order, saith, "Receive the Holy Ghost for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands: whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained." Where we may observe, that although some other words are inserted to determine and distinguish the office committed to them, yet all the same words are repeated, which our Lord Himself used at the Ordination of His Apostles; which the Catholic Church always judged necessary, not only in imitation of our Blessed Saviour, but likewise, because that the persons who are ordained Priests in His Church, are to preach the same Word, administer the same Sacraments, and exercise the same power in the Censures of the Church, as the Apostles themselves did. And therefore it is necessary that they should be endued with the same Spirit, ordained after the same manner, and entrusted with the same power of the keys as the Apostles themselves were. By which means, the means of grace and salvation administered by Priests thus ordained, become as effectual to those that use them aright, as when they were administered by the Apostles themselves; the Spirit, which they receive by this imposition of hands, being always ready to assist at their several administrations, and to bless and sanctify them to those who are duly prepared and disposed for them.

Now from what we have thus briefly, as the occasion would permit, discoursed upon this subject, I shall draw only two inferences; whereof the first concerns those who are now to be admitted into Holy Orders, either Priests or Deacons. For from what ye have now heard, ye may easily see the duty as well as dignity of the office you are called to, to be ministers of Christ and stewards of the manifold mysteries of God. And therefore I hope you have pre-

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pared yourselves according to the directions that have been given you, by prayer and fasting, for so great an undertaking; and so are both duly disposed to receive the Power and Spirit that shall be committed to you, and also fully resolved, by the grace of God, to exercise and improve it for your Master's use. For which purpose, as I do not doubt but you have seriously considered what questions will be propounded to you, and what answers ye must give to them; so I must entreat you to keep it always in your minds, how solemnly you this day devoted yourselves to the service of God and His Church, and what vows and promises you made in His presence, to be diligent in praying, in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in framing your lives accordingly; in ministering the doctrine, the Sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord commanded, and as this Church and realm hath received the same; to drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines, and to maintain and set forward, as much as in you lies, quietness, love and peace, among Christian people, and reverently to obey your ordinary, and those to whom is committed the charge and government over you. If ye do these things according as ye then promise, ye will save both yourselves and them that hear you; but otherwise, after all your preaching unto others, you yourselves will be castaways.

The other inference respects all here present: for, from the premises duly weighed, you cannot but all infer both the necessity and dignity of those Holy Orders which are now to be conferred: the necessity, in that the means of salvation cannot be administered effectually without them; and the dignity, in that they are effectually administered by them. Upon which account, you cannot but acknowledge there is a real honour and respect due to those who are thus ordained, though not for their own, yet for their office sake; and for His sake whose officers and ministers they are, in conveying the greatest blessings to you, that you are, or ever can be capable of.

1 Tim. 4. 12. Wherefore, as St. Paul saith to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth," so say I to you, do not despise Christ's Clergy for their youth, or poverty, or upon any other account whatsoever; but esteem them as ye ought, for His

sake, whose clergy they are: and thank God that you have such a Clergy among you, as is ordained according to Christ's own institution, and endowed with the same Spirit which He breathed into His Holy Apostles, handed down from them to us, by a continued and uninterrupted Succession; which is the great glory of our Church, and that which you can never sufficiently thank God for: as, considering that by this means you have the Word and Sacraments so truly and powerfully administered among you, that nothing but the extreme neglect of yourselves can hinder any of you from being happy for ever.

But that you may all be so, you must not think it enough that you have such a Clergy ordained among you, nor that the means of grace are so duly and regularly administered to you, but you must exercise yourselves continually in them, otherwise your having of them will signify nothing, unless it be to sink you lower into the abyss of misery. Neither must you use only some, but all the means that are appointed for the begetting or increasing of true grace and virtue in you. For if you neglect any, you had even as good neglect all; one being as necessary in its kind as another, and all assisting one another, in order to the attainment of the end. And after all, though you use the means, and all the means, you must use them only as means; and therefore not rest in them, nor trust on them, but only upon Him who hath appointed them, and hath sent His Holy Spirit to move in them, to make them effectual to the purposes for which they are used.

Do but this, and you will soon find, by your own experience, what infinite cause you have to bless God for your living in a Church where Holy Orders are conferred, and, by consequence, the means of salvation administered, so exactly according to the institution and appointment of Christ our Saviour: to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever, Amen.

SERMON III.

MANNER OF THEIR INSTITUTION WITH US.

2 Corinthians iv. 1.

Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not.

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The last public Ordination that was held here, happening upon St. Matthias's day, from his formal and solemn admission into the number of the Apostles, I took occasion to discourse in general of the public admission of persons to serve in the sacred ministry of Christ's Church, which we now call Ordination; shewing both the necessity of it, and likewise the ancient way and manner of performing it. Now, this falling out upon St. Matthew's day, who was both an Apostle and Evangelist, I have chosen this part of the Epistle appointed for the day, from whence to treat briefly of our admission into the ministry of the Gospel here spoken of, as it is now celebrated in our Church, according to the ancient way and manner before mentioned.

But before we come to that, we must observe, that the Apostle having, in the foregoing chapter, fully declared and proved the excellency of the Evangelical ministry beyond that of the Legal, he thence infers, that he and others, with whom this glorious ministry was entrusted, having received so great a mercy, did not faint or grow weary in the execution of it, nor were ever discouraged by any straits or difficulties they met with in it, as being fully persuaded that their faithful performance of their duty in it was a matter of that extraordinary consequence, both to themselves and others, that all the troubles that could ever befal them for it should never in the least dishearten them; but they were resolved, whatsoever came of it, faithfully to discharge the trust

that was reposed in them: "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."

And this certainly is left upon record, as a standing rule for the ministers of the Gospel to walk by in all ages and places of the world; especially those of our Church who have the same ministry or authority to administer the Word and Sacraments conferred upon them which the Apostle here speaks of, by being ordained regularly, according to the way and manner which the Apostles themselves, by the direction of Christ and His Holy Spirit, instituted in His Church, and with all the care and diligence, with all the decency and order, with all the piety and devotion, that can be used or exercised upon any occasion whatsoever.

But this being what I principally intend to insist upon at this time; without any further preface or apology, I shall, by the assistance of God, run through the whole Office of our Church for the Ordination of Deacons and Priests, and shew the excellency of the course and method she takes for the admitting any of her members into the ministry of the Gospel; that so they who are to be ordained may understand what great obligations lie upon them, not to be either idle or faint-hearted, but diligent and courageous in the discharge of the office committed to them: and all others may see what cause they have to bless God that they live in a Church wherein the Apostolical institution is so strictly observed, and so much care taken in the choosing and ordaining those who are to have the charge of their souls.

First, therefore, that all the pious and devout members of the Church, dispersed over the whole kingdom, may know the times when it is to be done, and so improve the interest they have in Heaven, for God's blessing and assistance in the management of so great a work: there are four set days in every year, all Sundays, appointed for it; and in the respective weeks immediately foregoing, called Ember Weeks, three days are set apart to be spent in fasting and prayer to God, that He would so guide and govern the minds of His servants, the Bishops and Pastors of His Church, that they may lay hands suddenly on no man, but faithfully and wisely make choice of fit persons to serve in the sacred ministry of His Church; and also that He would

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give His grace and Heavenly benediction to all that shall be then ordained to any Holy Function, that, both by their life and doctrine, they may set forth His glory, and set forward the salvation of all men.

Now whilst all good people are thus jointly imploring God's aid and direction of them in it, the Bishops, in their several dioceses, are considering whom to choose, and examining the fitness of those who offer themselves to be admitted to any Holy Function, either of Deacon or Priest, according to these general rules, which the Church for that purpose has laid down before them. As first, That none shall be admitted Deacon, except he be twenty-three years of age, unless he have a faculty; and every man that is to be admitted Priest shall be full twenty-four years old. That none be ordained, either Deacon or Priest, who hath not first some certain place where he may exercise his function, nor except he subscribe to the three articles mentioned in Can. 36; that is, first, to the king's supremacy, in all causes and over all persons, as well Ecclesiastical as temporal; secondly, the Book of Common Prayer, and ordering of Bishops, Priests, and Deacons; that it contains nothing contrary to the Word of God; that it may be lawfully used, and that he himself will use that and none other; thirdly, to the thirty-nine Articles, acknowledging them to be all agreeable to the Word of God.

Can. 33.

And besides all this, none must be admitted to Holy Orders except he can give an account of his faith in Latin, according to the said thirty-nine Articles; and he be able to confirm the same by sufficient testimonies out of the Holy Scriptures. And moreover, except he then exhibit letters testimonial of his good life and conversation, under the seal of some College, in Cambridge or Oxford, where he remained before, or else of three or four grave ministers, together with the subscription and testimony of other credible persons, who have known his life and behaviour by the space of three years next before.

According to these rules, every Bishop in his diocese, either by himself, or some minister deputed by him, is obliged to examine those who come to be admitted into the ministry of the Church: and if, upon due examination and

inquiry, he find that they are of the age required, have a real Title, subscribe to the thirty-nine Articles, and can give a good account of their faith, and good proof of their sober and pious life; then he makes choice of them, otherwise he rejects them, and lays them aside, as unfit for the ministry.

When any are thus approved of, and chosen by the Bishop to be admitted in to Holy Orders; he appoints them to meet him at the Cathedral, or some parish Church in his dioccse, where, after Divine service, and a sermon fitted to the occasion, the Archdeacon or his Deputy presents, first those who are to be admitted Deacons, to him, as he sits near to the Communion-table, in the presence of the whole congregation then present. Upon which the Bishop adviseth him to take heed that they whom he presents be apt and meet, for their learning and godly conversation, to exercise their ministry duly, to the honour of God and the edifying of the Church. To which the Archdeacon answers, That he has inquired of them as to their lives, and examined them as to their learning, and thinks them to be so, even apt and meet for the ministry they undertake. After which, that the whole congregation may be satisfied as well as the Bishop, of their fitness for the office; he requires that if any of them know any impediment or notable crime in any of the persons to be ordained, for which he ought not to be received into the ministry, they would now come forth and shew what that crime is. So that if any of you know any such crime or impediment in any of the persons to be now ordained, it is your fault if they be ordained, for you may hinder it if you will—nay, you are bound to do it, by discovering what objections ye have against it.

From whence ye may observe, by the way, that whatsoever disorderly or unworthy persons are admitted to Holy Orders ye must not blame the Bishop but yourselves, or those that know them, for it. For it cannot be supposed, that he should have the personal knowledge of every one that comes to him for Orders; all that he can do, is to inquire of them, and consider what credit is to be given to the letters testimonial which they bring to him, wherein it may be possible for him to be imposed upon. But they who do not only personally

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know them, but know them to be of so wicked and loose a conversation that they ought not to be received into the ministry, and yet do not acquaint the Bishop with it, either before, or when he requires them to do it in the face of the congregation; ought to bear all the blame now, and must answer for it another day.

After this, if no crime be objected, the Bishop, commending those that are to be ordained, to the prayers of the congregation, he reads the Litany, with a clause inserted in it proper for the occasion, and so hath not only the joint consent of the whole congregation that they should be ordained, but also their joint prayers and supplications to God for them. And then proceeding to the Communion-service, after the Epistle he administers the oath of supremacy to them: wherein they solemnly swear, that they heartily testify and declare that the king is the only supreme governor of this realm; and that no foreign Prince or Prelate, and therefore no Bishop or Pope of Rome, hath, or ought to have, any authority or jurisdiction here: and that they utterly renounce all such foreign powers, and promise from henceforth that they will bear faith and true allegiance to the King's or Queen's highness, their heirs and lawful successors, &c.

From which oath, as imposed on all that are ordained, there are several things worthy to be observed. As first, how careful our Church is, that no Papist should be admitted into her ministry; for he that takes this oath, doth, *ipso facto*, renounce Popery, for he renounceth the Pope himself, and all that supremacy and authority he pretends to in this kingdom. And then, how ridiculous and absurd must it needs be for any to imagine that the Clergy of England should favour Popery, when they cannot be made Clergymen without renouncing it! Hence, also, we may observe how strictly all that take this oath are obliged to bear faith and true allegiance to the King or Queen, and their heirs and successors, as strict as any oath can bind them. And, therefore, what they who were ordained, and so took this oath, and afterwards turned traitors and rebels, what I say, they will answer for themselves, I dread to think of: but let them look to that. As for you who are to take this oath now, I advise you to remember it as long as ye live; and be as

faithful in the keeping, as I hope ye are sincere in the taking of it.

The oath being thus administered to every one that is to be ordained, the Bishop propounds several questions to them; to which every one is bound to answer for himself, according to what is prescribed: and all this is done publicly, in the presence of the people, that they also may be witnesses of it.

The first question is,—

"Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministration, to serve God, for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of His people?"

A great question indeed, and that which no man can give a true and positive answer to, without having searched very narrowly into his own heart, and seriously considered the bent and inclinations of his soul. But it is a question very necessary to be propounded: for the Holy Ghost now supplies the place and room of our Blessed Saviour in His Church militant here on earth. And therefore, as it was by Him that the several offices themselves were at first constituted, so it is by Him that men are called to the execution of them; and it is by Him alone that all Ecclesiastical ministrations, performed by such officers, are made effectual to the purposes for which they are appointed; and therefore the Church is bound to take care that none be admitted into her ministry, but such as she believes and hopes to be called to it by the Holy Ghost. But she can have no ground to believe this, but only from the testimony of the persons themselves, none but themselves being acquainted with the motions of God's Spirit upon their own hearts. And therefore the Bishop requires them to deal plainly and faithfully with him and the Church, and to tell him, whether they really trust that they are moved by the Holy Ghost to take this office upon them? To which every one is bound to answer, "I trust so;" not that he knows it, or is certain of it, for it is possible that his heart may deceive him in it; but that he trusts or hopes it is so.

But what ground can any one have to trust that he is moved by the Holy Ghost to take the ministry upon him?

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To that, I answer, in short, That if a man finds, that upon due examination, the Bishop of the diocese where he is to serve is satisfied of his abilities and qualifications for the ministry; and that his great end and design in undertaking it, is to serve God, for the promoting of His glory and the edifying of His people: he hath good grounds to trust that he is moved to it by the Holy Ghost, it being only by Him that any man can be duly qualified for it, and moved to take it upon him, out of so good and pious a design as that is. But if either of these things be wanting—as if a man be not fitted for the office—he may conclude he is not called to it by the Holy Ghost; for He neither calls nor useth any but fit instruments in what He doth: or if a man be moved to it, out of a design, not to do good, but to get applause or preferment in the world, he may thence infer that he is not moved by the Spirit of God, but by the spirit of pride and coveteousness to it; and then can have no ground to expect that the Holy Ghost should ever bless and assist him in the execution of his office. According to these rules, therefore, they who are now to be ordained may discern whether they can truly give the answer required to this great question that will be propounded to them. As for their qualifications for it, the Bishop hath already approved of them; but as to their main end and design in undertaking the ministry, that must be left to God and their own consciences, who alone know it, and so can best judge whether they can truly say, that they trust they are moved to it by the Holy Ghost.

The next question propounded is,—

"Do you think that you are truly called, according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the due order of this realm, to the ministry of the Church?"

Which question seems to be propounded, that the Church may know, whether they be fully satisfied, in their own minds, of the legality of the Orders that they are to receive in our Church, and so to prevent both Papists and Schismatics from receiving of them. For none that are really such, can truly say, as every one who is ordained is bound to answer, "I think so."

In the next place, the Bishop asketh them, whether they

unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament? For unless they do so, they are not fit to be the ministers of the Word and Sacraments contained and prescribed in them; and therefore every one answers, "I do believe them."

Hitherto, the questions have been only concerning their present opinion and faith: but they which follow concern their future behaviour, and diligence, and faithfulness in discharging the office committed to them; and therefore their answers are all so many solemn promises made to God and His Church, to act accordingly: obliging themselves, in the presence of God, that they will diligently read the Holy Scriptures, and gladly execute the whole office of a Deacon there declared to them; that they will apply all their diligence to frame and fashion their own lives and the lives of their families, according to the doctrine of Christ, and reverently obey their ordinary. For, being asked by the Bishop, whether they will do these things or no, every one answers, "I will;" or, "I will do so by the help of God;" or, "I will endeavour myself, the Lord being my helper." Which promises, being so solemnly made before God and His Church, are certainly as binding as if they were made upon oath, and ought to be as religiously observed. Insomuch, that as all Christians, as such, should always remember and keep the vows and promises they made when they were baptized; so all ministers, as such, should always remember and keep those vows and promises which they made when they were ordained. For which purposes, it is very convenient, if not necessary, for us often to read over the Office of Ordination, or, at least, that part of it which contains the answers and promises which we made to God and His Church, when we were received into the ministry of the Gospel.

Now every one having thus obliged himself faithfully to discharge the office that shall be conferred upon him, and to behave himself according to the precepts of the Gospel, through the whole course of his life; the Bishop then lays his hands severally upon the head of every one that is to be ordained Deacon, and saith, "Take thou authority to execute the office of a Deacon in the Church of God committed

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unto thee, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." He lays his hands upon them, as the Apostles did upon those whom they ordained Deacons. And so he gives them authority to execute the office of a Deacon, not in his own name, but in the name of the most Blessed Trinity, whose ministers they are now made. And therefore the Bishop delivers to every one of them the New Testament, saying, "Take thou authority to read the Gospel in the Church of God, and to preach the same, if thou be thereto licensed by the Bishop himself."

Acts 6. 6.

By which means, they who are thus ordained are now enabled to read the Gospel with authority, as the ministers of Christ, whose Gospel it is. But they are not to preach, except they are licensed to do it by the Bishop himself; for the supreme care of all the souls in his diocese being committed unto him, it is not fitting that any should undertake to expound the mysteries of the Gospel there, without his leave and approbation.

All that are ordained Deacons having now authority to read the Gospel, the Bishop accordingly appoints one of them to read the Gospel on the occasion, as a sign and earnest of that authority which is now committed to them. And then, if there be no Priests to be ordained, he proceeds in the Communion.

But if there be any to be ordained Priests at the same time, they being before presented to the Bishop, to be admitted to the Order of Priesthood, after the same manner as the Deacons were, and with the same cautions, both to him that presents them and to the people that are present; the Bishop administers to them also the oath of supremacy, before spoken of, and then reads to them a very grave and pious discourse, of the great dignity and importance of the office whereunto they are called; exhorting them, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to be studious, diligent, and faithful, in the execution of it. And that the congregation of Christ, there assembled, may also understand their minds and wills in those things, and that their promise may the more move them to do their duty, he demands them to answer plainly to such questions, which he, in the name of God and His Church, shall propound to them.

Where we may observe, that the first question put to those who were ordained Priests, concerning their being moved by the Holy Ghost to take that office upon them, is now omitted: for these having been ordained Deacons before, it is supposed that they were then moved by the Spirit of Christ to take the ministry of His Gospel upon them, and there is no need of any further call from Him. For being once called by Him, though it was but to the lowest office of His own institution, the Church takes it for granted, that it is His pleasure they should be promoted to any higher office, if there be sufficient reason and occasion for it.

But the first question here is the same with the second in the Ordination of Deacons, concerning the legality of our Orders; and the next is, Whether they be persuaded that the Holy Scriptures contain all things necessary to salvation, and are determined to instruct the people out of the said Scriptures, and to teach nothing as required of necessity to salvation, but what they shall be persuaded may be concluded and proved by the same. To which every one answers, "I am so persuaded, and have so determined by God's grace." Which shews how necessary it is, that they who come to be ordained, should consider these things before hand, for otherwise how can they say, they have so determined already?

The other questions and answers are so framed, that they who are to be ordained Priests do thereby promise and oblige themselves, in the name and by the help of God, that they will give faithful diligence, always to minister the doctrine, and Sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and realm hath received the same: that they will be ready, with all diligence, to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to God's Word: that they will be diligent in prayers, and in reading the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies that will help to the knowledge of the same: that they will be diligent to frame and fashion themselves and their families according to the doctrine of Christ: that they will maintain and set forward, as much as lieth in them, quietness, peace, and love, among all Christian people:

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and that they will reverently obey their ordinary and other chief ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over them. For being asked, whether they will do these things or no, every one answers for himself, "I will do so, by the help of God," or "the Lord being my helper." Which shews the extraordinary care our Church takes, that all her Clergy may not only be orthodox, and virtuous, and good men, but faithful also in the discharge of their duty; in that she admits none to Holy Orders without laying upon them the highest obligations imaginable to be so. And they who, after all this, prove otherwise, will certainly have a very dismal account to give when our Lord shall hold His general Visitation at the last day.

After this, the Bishop having prayed, that God, who had given them a will to do all these things, would give them also strength and power to perform the same: he then desires the congregation, secretly in their prayers, to make their humble supplication to God for all those things. For which secret prayers, silence is ordered to be kept for a space.

There is something like to this in the Greek Church, where the Bishop, at the ordaining of a Priest, prays once μυστικῶς, secretly by himself. But here, every one in the congregation is desired to do it, that upon so solemn an occasion as this, all sorts of prayer may be used, even secret as well as public, and that every one by himself, as well as altogether, may lift up their hearts to God, and humbly supplicate His Divine Majesty for all these things; that is, that He would give those who are now to be ordained, grace to do all these things which they have now promised.

Wherefore, when ye hear the Bishop desire you to pray secretly, as ye would shew your dutifulness and obedience, not only to him, but to Christ too, in whose name he speaks, ye must fall down immediately upon your knees, and in the most humble and earnest manner that ye can, beseech Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, grace, and goodness, that He would be pleased, for Christ Jesus' sake, to assist those, who are now to be ordained, with such influences of His Holy Spirit, whereby they may be enabled always to perform what they have now promised; and so both save themselves and those that hear them. If ye do this heartily

and sincerely, as ye ought, it will, doubtless, be of great advantage, not only to them, but to yourselves too. For your prayers will, one time or other, return into your own bosom, and procure as great a blessing for you as you desire for them.

Now, the whole congregation having spent some time on their knees in secret prayer to God for His Holy Spirit, they all rise up again, and humbly confiding that God, according to His promise, hath heard their prayers; they join their forces, as it were, together, and with one heart and voice call for the said Blessed Spirit to come down upon them, saying or singing that Apostolical Hymn:—

> "Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,
> And lighten with celestial fire," &c.

Which done, the Bishop, with all there present, prays again, and praises and worships the most High God for these His inestimable benefits to mankind, in sending His Son to be our Saviour, in appointing several officers in the Church to administer the means of salvation to us, and in calling the persons now present to the same.

And when this prayer is ended, the Bishop, with the Priests present, lay their hands severally upon the head of every one that receiveth the Order of Priesthood, the receivers humbly kneeling upon their knees, and the Bishop saying—

"Receive the Holy Ghost, for the office and work of a Priest in the Church of God, now committed unto thee by the imposition of our hands: whose sins thou dost forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained. And be thou a faithful dispenser of the Word of God and of His Holy Sacraments, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Where there are several things worthy to be observed,—

As first, that although the whole power of Ordination be in the Bishop alone, and the imposition of his hands for that purpose is sufficient to the making of a Priest; yet the Church hath thought good to order that the Priests which are present shall lay on their hands too, in conformity, I suppose, to the ancient custom that hath obtained in the Latin

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Church: I say the Latin, because it was never heard of in the Greek, or any of the Eastern Churches, that any but Bishops should lay hands upon persons to be ordained. But in the Latin, there is an ancient Canon for it, or Decree of a Council, held at Carthage, Anno Dom. 398, which saith, *Presbyter cum ordinatur, Episcopo eum benedicente, et manum super caput ejus tenente, etiam omnes Presbyteri qui præsentes sunt, manus suas juxta manum Episcopi super caput illius teneant.* 'When a Priest is ordained, the Bishop blessing him, and laying the hand upon his head, let all the Priests also that are present, hold their hands upon his head, by the hands of the Bishop.' And from thence, I suppose, it was that our Rubric was taken; in that it agrees so exactly with it in every particular. And the reason of it seems to be the same with that of the fourth Canon of the Council of Nice, That three Bishops shall be always present at the Ordination of a Bishop. Not but that the Ordination is valid, and was always reputed so, although performed only by one Bishop; but this was done to prevent clandestine Ordinations, to make the work more public and solemn, and to signalise it by the concurrent testimony and consent of several persons joining together in it.

[Concil. Carthag. iv. capit. iii. ap. Hard. tom. i. p. 979.]

[Ap. Hard. tom. i. pp. 323, 4.]

For in the next place we must observe, that although the Priests, if any be present, lay on their hands also, yet it is expressly ordered that the Bishop shall say the words, "Receive the Holy Ghost," &c. For if a mere Priest should say them, or any one but a Bishop, the Ordination was always reckoned null and void. For this was a judged case in the second Council of Seville, Anno Dom. 619, which, understanding that a Bishop at the Ordination of one Priest and two Deacons, laid his hands upon them, but being troubled with sore eyes, so that he could not read, a Priest blessed them, or read the words of Consecration; they judged the whole action to be void, and that the persons who should have been ordained, did not receive *consecrationis titulum, sed ignominiæ potius elogia;* 'not the title of consecration, but rather a monument of ignominy;' and therefore were not to be reputed among the Clergy. So careful was the Church in those days, that every thing essential to Ordination should be performed by the Bishop himself: and so is our Church

[II. Concil. Hispal. A.D. 619. § V. "Hi qui supersunt et ab eo *non consecrationis titulum sed ignominiæ potius elogium* perceperunt—decrevimus ut a gradu Sacerdotalis vel Levitici Ordinis quem perverse adepti sunt, depositi æquo judicio abjiciantur." Hard. tom. iii. p. 559.]

at this time, and therefore requires that the Bishop say the words.

And then, concerning the words themselves, I observed the last time the reason why they are the same wherewith our Lord ordained His Apostles; only there are some others inserted to determine, and others added to explain, the office that is now conferred. And therefore I shall observe no more about them now, but that the Bishop pronounceth them, and so confers the Order, not in his own name, but "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," whose Vicegerent he is in ordaining persons to minister to His Divine Majesty in this sacred office of Priesthood.

The Priests being now ordained, the Bishop delivers to every one of them kneeling, the Bible in his hand, not only the New Testament, as it was in the Ordination of Deacons, but both Old and New, or the whole Bible; and when he delivers it, he saith,—

"Take thou authority to preach the Word of God and to minister the Holy Sacraments, in the congregation where thou shalt be lawfully appointed thereunto."

So that now they have authority, not only to read the Gospel, but to preach the whole Word of God, and to minister His Holy Sacraments with power and efficacy; the Holy Spirit which they have now received, being always ready at the execution of the several parts of their office, to make them effectual to the great ends and purposes for which they are appointed. But although they are by this means made Priests of the Catholic Church, and so may effectually administer the Word and Sacraments in any part of the world; yet nevertheless they are not to do it any where, but in the congregation where they shall be lawfully appointed: *i. e.* by the Bishop of the place, who alone can lawfully do it.

When this is done, the Nicene Creed is sung or said, and then the Bishop goes on in the service of the Communion; which all they that have received Orders are required to take together, and to remain in the same place where hands were laid upon them, until such time as they have received the Communion; that so they may be still more strictly

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obliged, upon the very Sacrament itself, faithfully to perform what they have now promised, and may receive further supplies of grace and assistance from our Blessed Saviour to do it, by partaking of His most precious body and blood.

Thus I have laid before you, the method and design of the offices which our Church hath appointed for the Ordination of Priests and Deacons; that so ye may understand the excellency of them, and be the better prepared, not to be idle spectators, much less disturbers of so great a work, but devoutly and heartily to join in the prayers that are made for those who are ordained. Now, from all that hath been said upon this subject, I shall speak a few, and but a few words; first, to those who come to receive Holy Orders, and then to all those who are present at it.

As for you, who are come hither to take upon you the office, either of Deacon or Priest, in the Church of Christ; ye have heard, and, I hope, considered, before now, the greatness of the office ye undertake, and the promise ye must make before ye are admitted into it. Let me now beseech you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, whose servants ye are now to be, that from this day forward ye look upon Him as your great Master, and lay out yourselves wholly in the service He calls you to. And whatsoever difficulties ye meet with in it, follow the Apostle's example, "faint not," nor be discouraged, but go on with cheerfulness and alacrity, as remembering ye serve the best Master in the world; one who will not only stand by and assist you, but reward you at last with a crown of righteousness.

As for the rest, I shall only say, that from what ye have heard, ye may easily see what cause ye have to thank God, that they who administer the means of grace and salvation to you, are so regularly, so solemnly, so Apostolically ordained; and how great an esteem and reverence ye ought to have for all who are thus ordained, though not for their own sakes, yet for His sake whose ministers they are, and whose work they do, even our dear and ever-blessed Saviour Jesus Christ: to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen.

SERMON IV.

SALVATION IN THE CHURCH ONLY, UNDER SUCH A MINISTRY.

Acts ii. 47.

And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved.

The Eternal Son of God having taken our nature upon Him, and in it, by His "one oblation of Himself once offered," made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world; "He is now able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him." But forasmuch as "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham," "the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, are all still reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." And as for those who partake of that nature which He assumed, and in which He suffered, and so are capable of pardon and salvation by Him, it is much to be feared, that a great, if not the greatest, part of them, also will, notwithstanding what He hath done and suffered for them, perish everlastingly: not by reason of any defect or insufficiency in His merits and power to save them, but by reason of their own obstinacy or negligence, in not performing those easy conditions which He requires of them, in order to their being actually vested in that salvation which He hath purchased for them. But whosoever among the sons of men will come up to His most gracious terms, and submit themselves wholly to be governed and saved by Him, He will take care that they shall be certainly saved, and advanced to eternal glory in Heaven. And for that purpose He always so orders it in His Providence, that all such are first admitted into, and made members of that

Heb. 7. 25.

Heb. 2. 16.

Jude 6.

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Church which He hath established upon earth; as the Holy Ghost here witnesseth, saying, "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

For the better understanding of which words, we shall briefly consider,

First, What is here meant by the Church.

Secondly, Who, by such as should be saved.

Thirdly, What by the Lord's adding to the Church daily such as should be saved.

As for the first, we must remember, that when our Lord was upon earth, He said He would build Himself a Church,

Matt.16.18. and that upon such a rock, "that the gates of hell should not prevail against it." In order whereunto, He first chose twelve persons, called His Apostles, to whom He revealed the design He came into the world about, and the great mysteries of the Gospel; and then sent them out to acquaint others with what He had taught them, and to work miracles for the confirmation of it; and to admit all such as would receive it into their society, by baptizing of them. By which means He soon had a considerable number of Disciples; out of which He selected Seventy others, to whom He gave

Luke 10. 1. power also "to preach the Gospel," and "to work miracles." And having thus laid the foundation, He soon after purchased to Himself an Universal Church with His own most precious blood. And rising again the third day, He presently took care to settle the perpetual government of it, by granting to His Apostles the like Power and Commission which He had received from His Father, for that purpose. And then He gave them orders "to go and preach the Gospel to all nations," and make them His disciples, by "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," and to teach them all things that He had commanded them; assuring them withal, that He Himself, by His Holy Spirit, "would be with them," and

Matt. 28. 19, 20. their Successors, "to the end of the world."

Our Lord having thus done all things which were necessary for the establishment of His Church upon earth, He ascended up into Heaven, there also to take the supreme care of it. And ten days after, upon the day of Pentecost, He, according to His promise, sent down the Holy Ghost in

a miraculous manner upon His Apostles, to assist them in speaking the languages of all nations, in order to their conversion, and to set home what they preached, upon the hearts of those who heard it; which wrought so effectually with them, that by one short sermon preached the same day by St. Peter, "about three thousand souls received the Word gladly, and were baptized." Acts 2. 41. And from that day forward, many others did so; who, therefore, in my text are said to be "added to the Church," that is, to the society or congregation of the faithful people before described; consisting of the Apostles, as the governors of it, and of such as were joined to them, and held communion with them in the Word and Sacraments, which our Lord had instituted.

And when the said society was dispersed, as it soon was, over the whole world, it was still the same, and retained the same name, being still called the Church. And not only the whole, but wheresoever any part of it was settled in any city, and the territories belonging to it, that also was called the Church of that city; as the Church of Hierusalem, the Church of Corinth, &c. And wheresoever there were several such cities and Churches in them belonging to any province or country, they are called the Churches of that country; as the Churches of Asia, Macedonia, &c. But as every private Christian is a member of some particular Church, so is every particular Church a member of the *Catholic* or *Universal*, which is always meant, when we read in Scripture of the Church in general, without the addition of place or country. As where it is said, that "Christ also loved the Church," and Eph. 5. 25. "Christ is the Head of the Church." So here, "And the Lord ver. 23. added to the Church daily such as should be saved," σωζομένους, or such as are saved, as the word may be rendered; but the sense is much the same: for our salvation plainly begins in this life, although it be perfected only in the other. It commenceth from our repentance and conversion; from our being saved from our sins, or "from this untoward genera- Acts 2. 40. tion," as the Apostle in this chapter words it. And they, and only they, who are thus saved from their sins upon earth, can ever attain to the salvation of their souls in Heaven. By such therefore as are, or should be saved, we are to understand such as being pricked in their hearts, and

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convinced of their former errors in opinion and practice, do heartily repent them, and gladly receive the Word, and embrace the terms propounded in the Gospel for the pardon of their sins, and for the assistance of God's grace and Spirit, that they may so serve Him here, as to enjoy Him for ever. Such as these, which shall certainly be saved, "the Lord daily added to the Church."

What we are to understand by that phrase, even the Lord's "adding them to the Church," may be easily and clearly gathered from the context; for these doubtless were added to the Church after the same manner as the three thousand were upon the day of Pentecost. Now of those it

Acts 2. 41. is here said, that "they were baptized," which was the way that our Lord had instituted for the admission of any into His Church. And then it follows in the next verse, that

Acts 2. 42. "they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers," that is, they constantly professed to believe the doctrine delivered by the Apostles; they held constant communion or fellowship with them, as became members of that society, whereof the Apostles and their Successors were deputed governors by Christ Himself; they frequented the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the public prayers of the Church. By which means they were so added to the Church, as to continue in it, and neglect no duty which was enjoined or performed by it. And thus questionless it was, that "the Lord" afterwards also "added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

A thing much to be observed; especially, when the Church of Christ is so slighted and undervalued, as it is in our days; for it is plain from these words, that our Lord did not only thus "add to His Church daily such as should be saved;" but He hath left it upon record, that all generations might know that He did so, and by consequence, that all which shall be saved, must be added to the Church as they were. Forasmuch as this being the way and method that he hath settled in the world for the saving of souls, or for the applying that salvation to them which He hath purchased for them; we have no ground to expect that He should ever recede from it, especially considering how strictly He Himself hath observed it, even to a miracle; as

might easily be shewn from several instances in the Holy Scripture. I shall mention only three, which are very remarkable.

The first shall be that of Cornelius the Centurion, whose prayers and alms being gone up for a memorial before God, God was pleased to send down an angel to him. What to do? To reveal the mysteries of the Gospel to him? To tell him what he must believe and do, that he might be saved? No; his commission was only to direct Cornelius to send for Peter, the Apostle of Christ, who should tell him what Acts 10. 6. he ought to do. And at the same time that He sent for him, Peter had a vision from Heaven, whereby he was fully assured, that he ought to receive the said Cornelius into the Church; and therefore he accordingly did so. From whence we may observe, what care our Lord took, what supernatural means He used, to bring Cornelius into His Church, in order to His saving of him.

The next instance shall be that of the Eunuch, treasurer to Candace, queen of the Æthiopians, who having been at Hierusalem to worship God, "The Angel of the Lord spake Acts 8. 26. to Philip" to go to such a place. When he came there, he saw the Eunuch sitting in a chariot, and the Spirit bade him go near to that chariot; which when he had done, he heard the Eunuch read the Prophet Isaiah. From whence Philip took occasion to expound the whole Gospel to him; insomuch, that before they parted, he was baptized, and "so ver. 38. added to the Church." At the same time that the Lord sent His angel to order Philip to go and meet the Eunuch, He could have sent him directly to the Eunuch himself. And when the Spirit spake to Philip to join himself to the chariot where the Eunuch was, He could, if He had pleased, have spoken to the Eunuch himself, and have caused him to understand the Scriptures without the assistance of any man. But it seems, that our Lord having now established His Church upon earth, as He would not send His angel to do it, so neither would the Spirit Himself undertake to direct the Eunuch how he might be saved "without the Church;" but only to bring him "into the Church," that "so" he might "be saved."

But that which is most of all to be observed in this case,

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is, the conversion of St. Paul; to whom our Lord Himself was pleased to appear in a miraculous manner, and to converse familiarly with him: and yet He Himself would not make known any part of the Gospel to him; no, not so much as that He was the Christ, but only that He was "Jesus, whom he persecuted." Yea, although Saul asked Him particularly, what He would have him to do, yet our Lord would not tell him Himself, but sends him to the Church to know it; "Arise," saith He, "go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." And then He appeared miraculously to Ananias, one of His disciples, in that city, and ordered him to go to Saul, and acquaint him with what he must do. By which means he, being fully instructed in the Gospel, was "baptized," and so "brought into the Church." From all which it is plain and evident, that our Lord is so resolved to "add" those "who shall be saved" to His "Church," that He would rather work miracles to bring men into it, than save any without it.

Acts 9. 6.

Seeing therefore, that the Holy Ghost hath so positively affirmed that the Lord added to the Church such as should be saved, and likewise hath given us such extraordinary instances of it; it is no wonder that the Fathers so frequently assert, that there is no salvation to be had out of Christ's Holy Catholic Church; but that whosoever would be a member of the Church Triumphant in Heaven, must first be a member of the Church here Militant on earth.*

Now that which I principally design, in discoursing upon this subject, is, to inquire into the reasons of it: not that I think it necessary or possible for us fully to understand that infinite reason which our Lord hath for all His actions, and in a particular manner for this. It is sufficient for us that we know, that He is both able and willing to save us, and that this is the way wherein He is pleased to do it. And therefore we, who can never be saved any other way but by Him, are obliged by our own interest to submit to it, whether we apprehend any reason for it or no. Howsoever, seeing it is

* Cyprian. Ep. 4, ad Pompon. p. 9, ed. Amst. Ep. 73; ad Jubajan. p. 208. Ambros. in Psal. xl. [Tom. i. p. 870, A. B. D. ed. Bened. fol. Paris, 1686-90.] Augustin. ep. ad Dona. post Coll. de Symb. ad Catech. lib. 4. c. 10. [Tom. vi. p. i. pag. 581. C. cap. x.]

a matter wherein the glory of His name, the honour of His Church, and the welfare of our own souls, is so highly concerned, by His leave and assistance, which I humbly beg His Divine Majesty to vouchsafe unto me, I shall present you with some such considerations, from whence ye may conclude it to be both reasonable and necessary, that they who "shall be saved" should be "added to the Church."

For, first, it is acknowledged by all Christians, that in order to our being saved by Christ, it is necessary that we know and believe His Gospel, and the fundamental truths revealed in it. And therefore, as God would have all men to be saved, so, for that purpose, He would have them come to the "knowledge of the truth." But it is as plain also, 1Tim. 2. 4.
that, as things now stand, we cannot come to the knowledge of the truth, but only by the Church, which is the witness and keeper of Holy Writ, and so, as the Apostle saith, "the 1Tim. 3. 15.
pillar and ground of the truth," by which the truth is upheld and maintained in the world, the Gospel preserved and propagated; and so true religion, and the way of salvation by Christ, is divulged and made known to mankind. Insomuch that, although I do not doubt but that whilst the Church was confined to one family, God, the Creator and Preserver of all mankind, did manifest Himself in an extraordinary manner to some that were not of that Church; yet, now that the partition-wall is broken down, and the Church dispersed over the whole world; now, I say, we have no ground to expect any such extraordinary revelations: but they that would "know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom [John17.3.]
He hath sent," must go to the Church for it; where they may read the Scriptures, and have them truly interpreted to them, and so fully understand what God would have them to believe concerning Himself and His Son. For what greater revelations can be expected, than either by an angel, or by the Spirit, or else by our Blessed Saviour? Yet, in the instances before mentioned, we see that the angel would not instruct Cornelius, the Spirit would not instruct the Eunuch, our Lord Himself would not instruct Saul, in the articles of the Christian faith; but they all sent them, every one his man, "to the Church," to be instructed by her. Wherefore seeing we cannot be saved without the knowledge

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of the Gospel, nor know the Gospel but by the Church, it is no wonder that "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

Moreover, as we cannot come to the knowledge of God's Word but by His Church; so neither can we rightly believe what is there revealed, nor duly perform what is there commanded, without the assistance of God's Holy Spirit, which is given by the ministry of the Church, and shall "abide with it for ever," as our Lord hath promised. For the promise being made only to Christ's disciples, and so "to His Church," none but such as are of that society can receive any benefit by it. And, therefore, when they who heard St. Peter's sermon were solicitous to know what to do, the Apostle said to them, "Repent, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost;" plainly implying, that they must first be "baptized," and so "received into the Church," before the Holy Ghost would come upon them. There are many such passages in the New Testament, which clearly shew that they only which are of the Church can partake of the Spirit which is in it; that they only who are members of that body, whereof Christ is Head, can be influenced and assisted by that blessed Spirit which flows from Him. And this certainly is one great reason why "the Lord addeth to the Church daily such as shall be saved."

John 14. 26.

Acts 2. 38.

But that which I intend, by the blessing of God, to insist chiefly upon, is taken from the method and means of salvation which are used in the Church, and nowhere else, as they ought to be. I know it is by Christ only that we can attain to salvation, and that it is by the Spirit only that we can be fitted and qualified for it. But howsoever, we must not, we cannot expect that He should act upon us immediately from Himself, without the use of those means which He Himself hath prescribed for that end; for He would never have prescribed them, but that He designed to act by them. I know also, that the efficacy of the Word and Sacraments, and all the means of grace which He hath ordained, are not to be ascribed to themselves, but only to His Spirit moving in them, and working together with them. But howsoever, in that He makes use of those means in His working

upon us, it is necessary that we also make use of them, if we desire to be wrought upon by Him; and by consequence that we be "added to" and continue "in the Church," if we would "be saved;" forasmuch as it is there only that we can enjoy those means which our Saviour hath appointed in order thereunto.

To prove this, we need only consider the means which Christ's Holy Catholic Church hath prescribed out of His Word, and the excellent course she takes to train up her children for Heaven, and fit them to converse with the holy Angels, and with Christ Himself in the other world: for he that duly considers this, will soon acknowledge, that the like is nowhere else to be found, but only in the Church.

But how shall we know what the Catholic Church hath always done in this case? Must we read over the Councils, consult the Fathers, and search the records of the Church in all ages? No; we need not give ourselves that trouble: for whatsoever means of grace and salvation have been used by the Catholic Church in all ages, the same, and none else, are to this day used by our own. Insomuch that, if we do but cast our eye upon the Church we live in, we may in that, as in a mirror, behold the constant practice of the Universal Church, in all things necessary to men's salvation.

This therefore is that which I shall now do, even briefly survey the constitution of our Church, and consider the excellent method observed in it for the bringing of souls to Heaven. In order whereunto, I must first premise one thing in general; which is, that the Bishops and Pastors of our Church having, by successive imposition of hands, continued all along from the Apostles, received the same Spirit which was breathed into them; and so regularly succeeding the Apostles, and supplying now their places in this part of the world, hence they cannot but have the same power and authority which the Apostles had, to confer, by the laying on of their hands, as they did, both the Spirit which they themselves received, and so their whole office, upon other Bishops; and likewise so much of it as is necessary for the right administration of the Word and Sacraments to other inferior officers in the Church, which we call Priests and Deacons: of which there are so many ordained every year by the imposition of their hands, that our whole Church is

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sufficiently supplied with them. So that there is no parish, or particular congregation of Christians in the whole kingdom, but hath, or may have a Priest thus ordained, and so rightly qualified for the effectual administration of the Word and Sacraments, and other means of grace and salvation among them: the Spirit which they have received, being always ready at the execution of their several offices, to bless and sanctify what is done by them, to the sanctification and salvation of those who attend upon it, and prepare themselves for it, as they ought.

But, seeing the means of grace thus administered by them become effectual to the purposes for which they are used only by this, viz. the co-operation of Christ's Spirit with them; hence all that desire or expect any real benefit from them must look higher than the means themselves, trusting upon God for His blessing upon them, and for the assistance of His Spirit in them, according to the promises which He hath made to that purpose; without which, we have no ground to expect they should be performed to us.

This being premised concerning the means of grace in general, we shall now consider them particularly, in the same method wherein the Catholic, or, which is all one, our Church appoints them to be used. By which we shall clearly see what an excellent course she takes to bring up her children in the true faith and fear of God, and so to make them heirs to the crown of glory. For which purpose, it is necessary that we begin at the first admission of them into her communion by Baptism. Concerning which we may observe, that the errors and iniquities of the times and place we live in are such, that there are many heathens amongst us, persons of riper years, and yet not baptized: for whose sakes therefore, our Church, to shew her readiness to receive them upon their repentance and conversion, hath appointed an office for baptizing of them: for which there was no occasion in this nation, for many ages until now. But although there be many such persons now among us, absolutely considered, yet they are but very few in comparison of those who are baptized in their infancy: and therefore I shall begin with those, and concern myself no further at present with the other.

A child therefore being born of Christian parents, and by them offered to the Church to be received into her society; the Church, in obedience to Christ's command, according to the practice of the Universal Church, expresseth her willingness to receive it. But withal, considering the frailty and mortality of the parents, she requireth some other persons, called Godfathers and Godmothers, to be specially present at it, as witnesses, proxies, and sureties. As witnesses, to attest upon occasion, that this child was baptized: as proxies for the child, by whom he may promise (or they in his name) that he will perform the conditions of the covenant which he is now admitted into: and lastly, as sureties to the Church, that this child shall be brought up in the Christian religion. So great care doth our Church take, that all who are admitted into her society, may believe and live as becometh Christians.

By these, therefore, the child being brought to the Church, it is there presented to the Lord (as Christ was in the Temple), whose minister finding it there, and understanding that it hath not yet been baptized, puts the people in mind of the necessity of Baptism, and exhorts them to pray, that this child may have it administered effectually to him. Upon which, the whole congregation there present join with him in supplicating the Most High God that He would wash and sanctify this child, so that it may be saved. Then the minister reads to them part of the Gospel concerning the children that were brought to Christ, draws some plain and proper inferences from it, and gives God thanks for the same. After that, he addresseth himself to the sureties, and acquaints them, that as Christ hath promised to hear their prayers for this child, which they have now brought to Him; so the child must, for his part, promise, by them his sureties, that he will renounce the devil and all his works, constantly believe God's Holy Word, and obediently keep His commandments. Which being accordingly done, by questions propounded by the minister in the name of the Church, and answered by the sureties in the name of the child; the minister prayeth that the child may have grace to perform what he hath now promised. And then having asked by what name they would have the

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child called, he poureth water upon it, and calling it by that name, he saith, "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:" which being the very words wherewith our Lord commanded this Sacrament should be administered, the child is now fully and perfectly baptized. And to testify her acknowledgment that it is so, the Church immediately receiveth it into her Communion, and solemnly declareth it to be now a Christian, not only by words, but also by making a cross upon the child's forehead, the common sign whereby Christians were always distinguished from Jews and Heathens: the minister saying, in the name of the Church, "We receive this child into the congregation of Christ's flock, and sign it with the sign of the cross," &c. After which, the minister stirs up the people there present to give God thanks for this favour, and to pray unto Him, that this child may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning. Which done, he puts the sureties in mind of their duty, now incumbent upon them, to see that the child be taught, so soon as he shall be able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise and profession he hath made by them, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health; and then to bring it to the Bishop to be confirmed by him.

This is, in short, the substance of that excellent office which our Church hath appointed for the public Baptism of infants. But in case of extreme necessity, lest the child should die without it, she admitteth of private Baptism, and absolutely requireth no more in the administration of it, than what is essential to it, even that the child be baptized with water, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." But if it lives, she requireth that it be afterwards brought to the Church, and that whatsoever was before omitted of the public office, be there performed to it.

Now the Church having thus gotten a new member added to her, and taken security for its education in the faith of Christ; for the better performance of it, she hath drawn up a short Catechism for the child to learn (when he is able), consisting of all things necessary for it to know, and nothing else. And that she may be certified whether the child hath learnt it or no, and likewise contribute what she can towards

his understanding all and every thing contained in the said Catechism, she commands that the minister of the parish where he lives, do frequently and openly in the Church, examine and instruct him in it.

By this means therefore this new Christian, now come to years of discretion, understanding what his sureties promised in his name, when he was baptized, is by them, or some other, brought to the Bishop to be confirmed by him. In order whereunto, he, in the presence of God, and of the congregation there assembled, renews the solemn promise and vow which was then made in his name, ratifying and confirming the same in his own person, and acknowledging himself bound to believe and do all those things which his Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for him. And that he may be enabled to do so, the Bishop, with the whole congregation there present, jointly pray to God to assist and strengthen him with His grace and Spirit. And then the Bishop, after the example of the Holy Apostles, lays his hand upon the child's head, and prays to God for him, saying, " Defend, O Lord, this Thy child with Thy heavenly grace," &c. After which the whole congregation join again with the Bishop in some other prayers to the same purpose. All which being duly performed as it ought, cannot certainly but be very effectual to the great ends and purposes for which it is used; as Christians in all ages have found by their own experience.

Our Christian being thus confirmed, he is now looked upon in the eye of the Church as no longer a minor, but of full age to receive and enjoy all the blessings and privileges which his Heavenly Father in the Holy Gospel hath settled upon him. And therefore his spiritual guardians, the Godfathers and Godmothers, being discharged, he is now to stand upon his own legs: and well he may, having so indulgent, pious, and wise a mother upon earth, as the Church is, to take care of him. For if he be but dutiful and obedient to her, and follow those good directions which she gives him, there is no fear of falling. For she considers what potent enemies he is to fight with; that the flesh, the world, and the devil, which he renounced, will all strive to recover their possession of him; and therefore she, out of

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God's Word, furnisheth him with such spiritual armour, that if he be not failing to himself in the use of it, he may not only withstand, but conquer them all. She considers every distemper he can be subject to, and finding suitable remedies prescribed for it in the Holy Scriptures, she directs him how to apply them, so as to prevent or cure it. In short, she [Phil.2.12.] considers the great work he has to do, no less than to "work out his salvation with fear and trembling," that he can never do it without the assistance of God's Spirit, and that he hath no ground to expect any such assistance but in the use of those means which God hath appointed for that end: hence she often calls upon him to use those means, instructs him how to do it aright, assists him in it, and so keeps him in continual exercise and employment about the work he hath to do, that he may "be saved."

For, in the first place, considering that in order to the preventing those many sins which are occasioned by the prevailing humours of the body, and also to the preserving his mind in a fit temper, both to perform his duties unto God, and to receive Divine illuminations and assistances from Him, it is necessary to keep his body always under; and considering likewise, that God Himself hath for that very purpose commanded, not only temperance at all times, but at some times abstinence and fasting: hence the Church hath set apart some certain days every year, whereon her son we now speak of, should by fasting bring his body into a constant subjection to his soul; lest otherwise, if there were no set times appointed for it, he should be, as most are, too apt to neglect it, and never fast at all, or, at most, but very seldom, and so to no purpose.

Now the days which she directs him to spend in fasting are the forty days of Lent, according to the custom of the Catholic Church, every year before Easter; and the three Rogation-days immediately preceding Holy Thursday. Besides which, she appoints three days, viz. Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday, in each of the four Ember Weeks, whereon to fast, not only for the purposes aforesaid, but likewise that he may the more effectually implore a blessing both upon the Bishops who are to ordain, and upon those who shall be ordained to any Holy Function the Sunday fol-

lowing: which if he neglect to do, he must blame himself, if any unworthy persons be then admitted into the sacred ministry of the Church. Whereas, if he perform his duty aright at that time, he may upon good grounds expect a greater blessing from the Word and Sacraments administered by those who are then ordained. Be sure his prayers will, one time or other, return into his own bosom; and therefore, I heartily wish that all the devout and pious souls in the Church, would, after the example of Christ and His Apostles, join together in fasting and praying upon so solemn occasions as those are. What a glorious Church, what an excellent Clergy should we then have! But to return to our Christian: the Lent Fast coming but once a year, and the Ember Weeks but once a quarter, for fear lest his body should in the mean time grow rampant, or his passions headstrong and unruly, the Church orders him to fast one day in every week, viz. Friday, the day whereon our Lord was crucified, as also the Eves or Vigils of some certain Holy days, the better to perform the duties, and to praise God for the mercies commemorated the day following. And if he be temperate in all things, and besides that, observes these prescribed by our Church, as really days of fasting and abstinence, it is very much if his body be not kept in due subjection to his soul. But if at any time he finds it is not, he may add some more days, as he sees occasion; especially Wednesdays, which were also observed by the primitive Christians, and upon which our Church hath appointed the Litany to be used, as well as upon Fridays. And whatsoever degrees of grace and virtue he shall attain to, he must never think that so long as he continues in health, he stands in no need of fasting: as considering that the great Apostle himself was forced to "keep his body under, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when he had preached unto others, he himself should be a castaway." 1 Cor. 9. 27.

By this means, therefore, our Christian keeping his mind continually serene, and free from any annoyance or disturbance from the humours of the body, is always in a right disposition to receive such impressions as are necessary to the making him a real and true saint: which that he may be, the Church useth all the means she can to keep his soul

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continually possessed with a deep sense of God, and with as high apprehensions of the great mysteries of the Gospel, as it is capable of. For which purpose she so orders it, that every thing relating to the public Service which she requires him to perform to God, as well as the Service itself, strikes an awe and reverence of the Divine Majesty into him, as being set apart and appropriated only to that use. Thus she appoints some certain days, wherein to lay aside all other business, and apply himself wholly to this: especially she, out of God's own Word, enjoins him to keep holy the first day in every week, which is therefore called the Lord's Day, because devoted to His service. Besides which, to keep the great mysteries of the Gospel always fresh in his mind and memory, she prescribes him some certain days every year, whereon to commemorate the Nativity, Circumcision, and Manifestation of Christ to the Gentiles; His Presentation in the Temple; His Passion, Resurrection, and Ascension, and His Mission of the Holy Ghost; the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin; with the Lives and Deaths of the Apostles and Evangelists, who did not only propagate the Gospel in the world, but sealed it too with their own blood. For the very setting apart of these and the like days for the public worshipping of God, conduceth very much to his remembering and understanding the great things transacted on them, and so to his better apprehending and admiring the power and goodness of God discovered in them.

And for this reason also it is, that she requires him to perform his public devotions to God in God's own House, a place consecrated wholly to Him and His service. And for his better doing of it there, she appoints one of God's own ministers, a person set apart for that very office, to assist him in it. And she commands this person, at that time, to be in a different habit from what he wears at any other time; and all to take off our Christian's thoughts, as much as may be, from all things else, and to fix them only on God, and the great work he is now about: the place, the minister, the habit, every one putting him in mind that he is not now about any common or worldly employment; but in the special presence of Almighty God, worshipping Him, and,

therefore, both in soul and body, should carry himself accordingly, with reverence and godly fear.

And then, as for the Service itself, the Church hath provided him such a Liturgy, wherein all things are done to his edifying. So that he can never come to God's House, but, if it be not his own fault, he may return home again wiser and better than he came: for he can want for nothing, but he there prays for it; he can have nothing, but he there gives God thanks for it; he can be ignorant of nothing that is needful for him to know, but he is there taught it. And, lest he should at any time be seduced into error, or tempted to sin; lest he should grow flat in his devotions, cool in his charity, remiss in any duty to God or man, or careless of his own eternal good; she hath ordered the Holy Scriptures to be often expounded, or a sermon preached to him: and that too, not by any one that will undertake it (for then the remedy might prove worse than the disease), but by one who, by fasting and prayer, and the solemn imposition of the Bishop's hands, is ordained to that office; by one who hath subscribed to all the Articles of religion; by one who hath publicly declared his unfeigned assent and consent to the use of all things contained and prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer; by one approved of, and licensed thereunto, by the Bishop of the diocese; who, if he find just cause for it, is empowered and obliged to take away his license again, and to suspend him from the execution of his office. So that if our Christian lives under a minister that doth not act according to the rules, or doth not preach according to the doctrine of the Gospel, or doth not perform his duty in every thing as he ought; it is in a great measure his own fault, in that he doth not acquaint the Bishop with it, whose office it is to redress such grievances as these are. So that if he will himself, he may be sure to have the Word of God, rightly, duly, and constantly administered to him: and not only the Word, but likewise the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, which he is required to receive as often as possibly he can, to put him in mind of what his Saviour hath done and suffered for his sins; and so to confirm his faith in Him, inflame his love to Him, and to dispose and qualify him the better to converse with Christ in Heaven; to which

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nothing contributes more than frequent addresses to Him in this Holy Sacrament upon earth.

Thus therefore it is, that he who holds constant communion with our Church, is continually employed by her about some or other of those means which Christ hath ordained for his salvation; and to which He hath promised the assistance of His own Spirit. By virtue whereof, the [Tit. 2. 12.] Christian we have hitherto discoursed of, is enabled "to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." But having spent some time in such holy exercises as these are, we must suppose him at length to be seized with some distemper, in order to his departure into the other world: and then the Church, to shew her great care of him to the last, requires the minister of the parish where he lives, to go and give him a solemn visit. And that he may be sure to have the best directions that can be given him at that great juncture, she herself hath drawn up an Order for the visitation of him, and likewise for the administration of the Holy Communion to him; which is the best cordial he can take to support his spirits, and carry him through the great work which he hath now to do. And when it hath pleased Almighty God, of His great mercy, to take unto Himself the soul of this our dear brother, the minister, by the order, and in the name of the Church, commits his body to the ground, "in sure and certain hope of a joyful resurrection to eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Thus we see how our Christian, from his first admission into the Church Militant upon earth, is conducted and governed all along by her, until at length he is advanced to the Church Triumphant in Heaven. From whence it is easy to observe, what an excellent method she proceeds in, and what effectual means she useth for the attaining so great an end: and, by consequence, how necessary it is for all of us to be so "added to the Church" as to continue steadfast in her communion, and carefully to follow all her directions, if ever we desire "to be saved." For although I have instanced only in one single person, we are all equally concerned in what hath been said of him: yea, every one of us should look upon himself as the person spoke of all

along. For I hope we are all baptized, and so admitted into the Church, as I supposed him to be: and therefore if we do but observe these rules which she, out of God's Holy Word, hath laid before us, as I supposed him to do, there is no doubt but that we also, ere long, shall be glorified saints in Heaven.

But I am very sensible, that for all the great care that our Church taketh of all her children, many of them are very undutiful and disobedient to her, and so careless of their own salvation, that they do not only neglect, but despise the means which she administers for the attainment of it. But what then doth she do with such as these? In short, she, in great wisdom and prudence, makes use of all the fair means that can be thought of, for the reclaiming of them. But if that will not do, she delivers them over to Satan, for [1Cor.5.5.] the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord. But seeing the excellency of our Church appeareth in the exercise of her power, as much as in any thing else; it may not be amiss if we take a short view of that wise and excellent method which she observeth in it.

First, therefore, our Church being, by the blessing of God, of the same extent with the kingdom in which we live, and, as so, subject to the same prince as its supreme governor upon earth; for the better management of that power which Christ hath left with it, it is divided into two Provinces, over each of which there is an Archbishop; each Province is subdivided into several Dioceses, over every one whereof there is a Bishop: in every Diocese there is one or more Archdeacons: every Archdeaconry is divided into several Deaneries, and every Deanery into several Parishes. And in every Parish, as there is a Priest rightly ordained for the administration of the Word and Sacraments to all the Christians that live there; so there are other officers, called Churchwardens, chosen every year, and appointed, not only to look to the fabric of the Church belonging to the said parish, and to provide all things necessary for the worshipping of God in it, but likewise to inspect the lives and actions of all the Christians that live there; to take notice of all that live in any notorious sin, or neglect the means

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which God hath ordained for their salvation, and to certify and present their names to such officers as the Church hath appointed to consider what to do in such cases. And although such persons, being Christians, are obliged by their religion to take all the care they can of their neighbours' souls, and therefore to acquaint the Church with their evil and pernicious courses, that she may interpose her power for the reclaiming of them; yet to bind them more strictly to it, when they are admitted into that office, they take a solemn oath, in the presence of Almighty God, truly and faithfully to execute the same, to the best of their skill and knowledge. And that none of them may be ignorant of what they are to present, they have *Articles of Inquiry* delivered to them, wherein all and every thing and person presentable, is plainly and distinctly set down.

And as this is certainly the best and surest way that the Church could ever find out, whereby to understand which of her members either neglect those duties which should further their salvation, or commit such sins as will impede and hinder it; so is the course, too, that she takes for the correcting and reforming them. For as the Churchwardens are obliged to make their Presentments twice a year, and may do it oftener if occasion require it; so is the Bishop obliged to go about his diocese once every three years, that he may understand the state of the flock committed to him, of which he must one day give a strict account to the great Shepherd of souls. And lest any thing should happen in the mean time that may require a more speedy examination, he, according to the custom of the Primitive and Catholic Church, hath one or more Archdeacons under him, canonically ordained, authorised, and required, every one to visit so much of the diocese as is under his jurisdiction once a year, or oftener if need be, to receive the foresaid Presentments, and to inspect, and, what in him lies, reform all irregularities, either in Clergy or Laity. And moreover, that the Church may never want an opportunity of being informed of any misdemeanours that she is bound to take cognisance of, she hath other officers, both under the Bishop and Archdeacon, who keep her courts all the year long, as occasion happens, and have the power to cite all delinquents

that are presented, and to examine and try all such Ecclesiastical causes and matters as are brought before them.

But here we must observe, that as the Churchwardens of every parish who present offenders to any of these courts are always laymen, so the Chancellors, Commissaries, Officials, and other officers in these courts, who receive and examine such Presentments, are ordinarily laymen too; and it is but reasonable, and in some sense necessary, they should be so. For if none but Clergymen should search into the faults of the laity, the laity might be apt to suspect they were too severely dealt with: whereas, being tried by men of their own rank and brotherhood before sentence is passed upon them, they cannot blame the Church for it, nor imagine that she can have any other design upon them, but only to do them good, and make them better. Besides that the causes which are brought into these courts, are many, and take up a great deal of time, before they can be brought to an issue; and therefore, if Clergymen only should be employed in them, it would take them off too much from the ministry of the Word and Sacraments, which they are obliged by their office continually to attend; especially considering that the causes are not only many but diverse too, and some very intricate and mixed; so that to search into the bottom of them all, and fully to understand what is just and meet to be done in every one of them, requires great knowledge and skill in the whole body of the Ecclesiastical laws, and the Temporal too, so far as they any way concern the Church: which no man can attain to, without making it his constant business and study. Which not consisting with the many other duties incumbent upon those who are ordained to any Holy Function, the Church always found it necessary that her Bishops, and all that exercise her jurisdiction under them, should have some of her other members learned in the laws, to direct and assist them in the administration of it, and under them to transact and try all causes relating thereunto. Which, doubtless, all things considered, is the best way the Church could ever think of, whereby to secure her governors from being maligned, her laws from being violated, and so her members from being injured through mistake or ignorance.

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Neither must we look upon this as any novel invention, but as the sense and practice of the Universal Church for many ages: for we find such Ecclesiastical officers as those are, mentioned near 1200 years ago by Justinian the Emperor, who, in his Code and Novel, sometimes calls them by their Greek name *Ecdicos Ecclesiæ*, or *Ecclesiecdicos;* sometimes by the Latin, *Defensores Ecclesiæ*, that is, properly, Church-advocates, Ecclesiastical lawyers; and sometimes *Episcoporum Ecclesiecdicos*, the Bishops' Ecclesiastical advocates, which he reckons amongst lay officers, and yet supposeth them to be in every Church, and to take care of the affairs of it under the Bishop. Before this, we meet with them in the Novels of Valentinian the Third. As also in the canons of the fourth General Council, held at Chalcedon, A. D. 451, which requires that Clergymen and Monks, which stay at Constantinople without having any business there, should be expelled thence by the *Ecdic,* or, as we say, the Chancellor of the Church. And elsewhere the same General Council reckons these *Ecdics*, or advocates, amongst those Ecclesiastical officers which are not admitted into Holy Orders, and yet ought not to give any money for their places. From whence it appears that these lay officers were at that time received and established in all the provinces and dioceses of the Universal Church; for otherwise this General Council, consisting of above six hundred Bishops, gathered together from all parts of the Christian world, would never have made any laws about them.

L. 42, C. de Episcop. et Cler.

L. 6, C. de his qui ad Ecclesiam confug. Novel. 56.

L. 42, C. de Episc. et Cler. § 9;

L. 34, C. de Episcop. Audientia, § 5.

Valent. Novel. tit. 12.

[Canon ii. ap. Hardouin. Tom. ii. pp. 601-2.]

Chalced. Can. 23.

[Hard. ii. pp. 611-2.]

Chalced. Can. 2.

How long before this they were brought into the Church, I shall not undertake to determine. Only this we know, that the African Bishops assembled in council, A. D. 407, made it their request to the Emperors Arcadius and Honorius, that they might have liberty to choose and constitute Church-advocates out of those who pleaded in the Civil courts, who might manage the affairs, and defend the rights and privileges of the Church there. And that this request was readily granted, is plain from the rescript of the said Emperors to that purpose, directed within six months after to the Proconsul of Africa, still extant in the Theodosian code. From whence it seems, that those advocates were not suffered before this time to plead for the Church in the

[Hardouin. Tom. i. pp. 920-21.]

Concil. Carthag. Can. 97.

L. 38, C. T. Episcopis Eccles. et Cler.

Civil courts of Africa; but it doth not follow but they might be employed before, both there and elsewhere in the Ecclesiastical. And it is very probable that these offices began to be erected, if not before, at least soon after the Empire became Christian, so that the Church had free liberty to exercise her power and authority in it, and was not only allowed to do it, but countenanced and assisted by the secular power. For then there was a necessity of having such officers, not only for the reasons before-mentioned, but likewise, because the Emperors themselves, in favour of the Church, put forth several edicts and laws concerning Ecclesiastical persons and matters; which being drawn up in the same form and manner, and intermixed with the Civil laws, could never be duly executed but by persons skilled in the Imperial, as well as the Ecclesiastical laws, and in the way and manner of proceeding upon them. And therefore from that time forward it was necessary that such advocates as had been trained up in the Civil law, should be appointed and empowered to order and manage the Ecclesiastical courts under the Bishop in every diocese, that so both the laws of the Empire that had any relation to the Church, and those which were made by the Church itself, might be duly executed in due form and manner, so as not to contradict, but be assistant to one another.

But at what time, and for what reasons soever, these officers were at first brought into the Church, it is manifest, from the aforesaid Canons of the Fourth General Council, that the Universal Church had then received them; and that they have been all along continued ever since, can be doubted of by none that are conversant in Church history. Neither can any man yet imagine, that the Universal Church for so many ages together should agree in such a thing as this, but upon very good grounds and reasons. Howsoever, the general practice of the Catholic Church is a sufficient obligation as well as warrant to every particular Church, to observe the same as near as it can. And therefore it was, that our Church at the Reformation, looking upon herself as obliged to hold communion with the Catholic, as well as to separate from the Romish Church, retained this ancient and general form of keeping her courts by advocates learned

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in the Civil and Canon Law; who are nominated and approved of by the Bishop in every diocese, but receive their power and authority not only from him, but from the laws of the Church; yea, and of the State too, there being scarce any custom or usage (upon which the Common law of the land is grounded) in the whole kingdom, that can plead longer prescription than this can.

But seeing these, as all other courts in the world, may be liable to abuses and corruptions, to prevent them as much as may be, the Church in her Canons doth not only require a solemn oath to be taken by every one that shall be admitted into any office there, to deal uprightly and justly in the same, without respect or favour of reward; but hath likewise provided suitable punishments, to be inflicted upon those who shall either neglect their duty, exceed their commission, or do any thing unbeseeming the place they are in. And if, notwithstanding all this, any one shall be unjustly dealt with, or but think himself to be so, he may appeal from the lower to the higher Courts, from the Archdeacon to the Bishop; from the Bishop to the Archbishop, and from him to the Queen: who, being in all her dominions supreme governor over all persons, in all causes, as well Ecclesiastical as Temporal, as it is necessary that she should have these Ecclesiastical as well as Temporal courts, under her, where such causes may be judged; so when they are brought up so high as to herself, they must needs be finally determined, forasmuch as from her no appeal can be to any other court or person upon earth.

Can. 127.

Can. 134.

Now these courts being thus established in the Church, when any offender is presented into any of them, he is cited to appear there, which if he neglect or refuse to do, he is pronounced contumacious, one that resisteth and contemneth the power that Christ hath given to His Church, which for many reasons was always judged one of the greatest sins that a Christian can be guilty of; and therefore is proceeded against accordingly. But if he appear, his cause is impartially searched into; and if, upon due examination, he be found innocent, he is presently discharged: but if he appears to be guilty of any notorious crime which the Church is bound to take notice of, she useth all means possible to

bring him to a just sense of his sin, to a hearty repentance for it, and to make what satisfaction he can for the offence that he hath given to all good Christians by it. But if all other means prove ineffectual, she casts him out of her Communion, and so from the society of all good Christians, according to the saying of our Lord, "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man, and a publican." But so, that if he shall afterwards repent and submit himself, the Church is always ready to receive him into her bosom again, there to nourish and provide all things for him, that he may be saved. Matt.18.17.

Thus in that of our own, I have briefly run through the whole Constitution of the Catholic Church, and the several means that are used in it, and in it only, for the salvation of men's souls, which whosoever seriously considers, can never wonder that they who shall "be saved," should be "added to the Church."

Nothing now remains, but to shew what influence the consideration of these things should have upon our minds and actions, which shall be soon dispatched. For if we recollect what hath been said upon this subject, and lay it so together, that we may take a full view of the whole method observed in the Church, for the making us holy here, and happy for ever, we cannot but easily see, both what necessity there is of our being "added to the Church" in general, and what infinite cause we have to give our most humble and hearty thanks to God, both for his settling and restoring such a Church as this is to us. A Church wherein all the means of grace and salvation are so duly and effectually administered to us, that if we be not failing to ourselves in the use of them, we cannot but be saved. A Church so exactly conformable to the Catholic in all things, that none can separate from her without making a Schism in Christ's mystical body, and consequently endangering the salvation of his own soul. A Church so far exceeding those of Rome and Geneva, that would either Papists or Sectaries lay aside their prejudices, and impartially consider what our Church is, and compare it with their own, they would need no other arguments to persuade them to return unto her, and to live and die in constant Communion with her. A

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Church, to say no more, as orthodox in its doctrine, as regular in its discipline, as grave and solemn in its worship, as agreeable to Scripture-rules, as well accommodated to the whole design of the Gospel for the bringing of souls to Heaven, as any Church in the whole world. And that such a Church as this should be at first planted amongst us, and after it had been destroyed by the malice of the Devil and his agents, should be again restored to us by the immediate hand of God, who can think of it without adoring the hand that did it?

But we must remember to shew forth His praise for so great a mercy, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves wholly to His service, according to the rules and orders of the Church, which He hath thus graciously settled amongst us; that as we have the best of Churches, we may be likewise the best of people; and so shame our adversaries on all sides into an hearty compliance with our Ecclesiastical Constitution, by letting them see how far we exceed them in true piety and devotion, and read the excellency of our Church in the excellency of our lives, who hold Communion with her. By this means as many, by the blessing of God, have been lately "added to our Church," there will be daily more and more. This also would be a most effectual way whereby to secure and defend our Church against Heresy and Schism, against Popery and Superstition, against Profaneness and Debauchery, and against all those diabolical stratagems and devices, those seditious principles and practices whereby it was destroyed once, and was like to have been so again but very lately. For if we do but live answerably to the means that we enjoy, and serve, and please, and worship, and obey God, as our Church directs us, we need not fear what men or Devils can do against us, nor concern ourselves with what may, or what may not, happen hereafter; but still trust in God, who as He hath delivered us, He will yet deliver us. We have no cause to doubt of His kindness and favour to our Church, having had so great, so wonderful experience of it already.

[2 Cor. 1. 10.]

But for that end, we must be sure to live, as in the true faith and fear of God, so also in humble obedience and steadfast loyalty to the Queen; for that is absolutely necessary,

not only as a duty in itself to God, but likewise as a means for the supporting our Church, by strengthening the hands of her, whom God is pleased to make the happy instrument of preserving it to us. And therefore I cannot but admire with what confidence we can profess any value or kindness for the Church, and yet talk or act seditiously against the Queen: for, that is to pretend to uphold the Church with one hand, and to endeavour in good earnest to pluck it down with the other. Be sure, all the real members of our Church are as faithful subjects to the Crown; neither can they be otherwise, forasmuch as the Spirit which runs through the whole body of the Catholic, and by consequence our Church, as I have shewn, puts them upon universal obedience to all the commands of God; and to these amongst the rest, of "honouring the King," and being subject and obedient to the higher powers. And hence it is, that as we never heard of any rebels in the Primitive Church, so neither are there, nor can be, any such amongst those who are really of ours; which is the great glory of our Church, and a clear demonstration of its Apostolical Constitution, and that which, if duly considered, would make all the Christian princes in the world endeavour to reform the Churches seated in their dominions according to her pattern and example; and to protect them too, when they are so reformed: although it was for nothing else, but to keep their kingdoms quiet, and so make the government easy to themselves; much more, if they respect their own and their people's souls, that they may "be saved."

But that we may all be so, we must not think it enough to be admitted into the Church, and made visible members of it. For though all that shall be "saved, are added to the Church;" yet it doth not follow, that all who are "so added to the Church, shall be saved." It is true, all such are in a state of salvation, and in the way to it, but except they continue in that state, and walk in that way, they can never attain to the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls.

Wherefore I humbly pray and advise all that desire in good earnest to be saved, that you would not content yourselves with being members of the Church in general, nor

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yet with doing only some of those things which she requireth of you; but to use all the means, and observe the whole method, which she, out of God's Holy Word, hath prescribed for that end; otherwise you will certainly deprive yourselves of something that would have been very beneficial, if not necessary for you: as ye may easily see, if ye will but look back upon that short scheme which I have now given you of it. As for example, I suppose ye are all baptized, but are ye confirmed too? If ye be not, ye still want one of those means which the Holy Apostles and their Successors, in all ages, have used, whereby to obtain the gifts and graces of God's Holy Spirit for those who are baptized. And suppose you are confirmed, do ye also observe the several Fasts of the Church? If ye do not, it will be very difficult, if not impossible, to keep your bodies in that due frame and temper, as that they may be fit temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in. And supposing ye fast, do ye also pray to Almighty God, both publicly and privately? And do ye perform your public devotions to God, in that form, after that manner, and at such times, as the Church hath appointed? Do ye hearken to God's Holy Word, as read and expounded by her? Do ye receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as oft as she is ready to give it you? If ye neglect all, or any of these, and the like means of salvation which are there administered, you had as good be "out of the Church" as "in" it, and have no more ground to expect to "be saved," than you have to accomplish any other end without using the means.

Whereas, do but ye truly and constantly observe all and every one of those means which our Church, as I have shewn, administereth to you, and trust and depend, as ye ought, upon the promises of God for the assistance and cooperation of His Holy Spirit with them: and I dare assure you in the name, and in the presence, of my great Lord and Master Jesus Christ, you shall soon find them, by His grace and blessing, effectual to the great ends and purposes for which they are ordained, even to the enlightening of your minds, to the regulating of your passions, to the confirming of your faith, to the mortifying of your lusts, and to the making you real and true saints, sincerely pious towards

God, loyal to our sovereign, just and charitable towards all men: by which means ye will be fitted and qualified, not only for the pardon of your sins, by the blood of Jesus, but likewise for Heaven and Eternal Glory. So that when ye depart out of this world, ye will be admitted into the blessed society of the Holy Angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, where you will live with God Himself, and laud and magnify His great and glorious name, both for His continuing His Church to you, and for His "adding you to His Church," that "ye might be saved," by the merits and mediation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever. Amen. [Heb. 12. 23.]

SERMON V.

THE TRUE NOTION OF RELIGIOUS WORSHIP TO BE PAID BY MINISTERS.

JOHN xii. 20.

And there were certain GREEKS *among them that came up to worship at the feast.*

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WE are here met together at this time to do the work, the great work which we were all made for, even "to worship Him that made us." And therefore it will be very seasonable to consider what that work really is, and how it ought to be always done. For I cannot but in charity believe, that they who constantly attend the places of God's public worship do truly intend and desire to worship God there; and that their failures in the performance of it do generally proceed either from ignorance or mistake of the way and manner how to perform it. For it cannot be easily imagined, that if people did rightly understand what it is to worship God, they should ever fancy that coming to Church, and continuing there whilst another prays and preaches, is all the worship that He that made them requires of them: and yet, to our shame be it spoken, this is all that is done by most of our congregations, instead of worshipping God.

The truth is, we have in a great measure lost the right manner of performing religious worship, in a crowd of disputes about the object to which it ought to be performed. The Church of Rome hath of late degenerated so far from the doctrine and practice of the Primitive and Universal Church, that they who live in her Communion, do commonly perform the same acts of religious worship to creatures, which they do to the great Creator of the world, "God blessed for ever." This we justly condemn them for, as

[Rom. 9. 5.]

judging it one of the greatest sins that a Church or person can be guilty of. But in the midst of this our just zeal against the Papists, for giving as much worship to creatures as they do to the Creator, we must have a care of falling into the other extreme, even of giving no more worship to our Creator, than what may be given to a creature; which is the great fault of too many among us. For the reforming or preventing whereof for the future, it will be necessary to lay aside all prejudices, and consider impartially, what that is which Almighty God would have us do, when He commands us to worship Him; or what is the true notion of religious worship, properly so called, as it is distinguished from all other duties which we owe to God; and is commonly expressed in Scripture by the word προσκύνησις, *adoration*, and so is always distinguished from λατρεία, which signifies the *serving of God* in general, and not only that particular act whereby we are properly said to adore and worship Him.

This therefore is that, which by His grace and assistance, I shall endeavour to do, in the explication of the words which I have now read: "And there were certain Greeks among them which came up to worship at the feast."

Where, by Greeks we are to understand such Gentiles who, by conversing with the Jews, or else by some other means, had attained to the knowledge and embraced the worship of the true God. These are often mentioned in the Acts of the Holy Apostles, where they were called "devout" or "religious Greeks" and "proselytes;" because, although they did not communicate with the Jews in their sacrifices and offerings, and other rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law; yet they worshipped the same God as they did. [Acts 2. 5; 10. 2, 7; 13. 43; 17. 4, 17; 21. 12.]

Of such Greeks or Gentiles as these were, it is here said, that certain of them were now among the Apostles and Disciples of Christ, and that they "came up to worship at the the feast." Where there are three things to be observed concerning them:—

I. The place whither they came; "they came up."

II. The time when; "at the feast."

III. The business they came about; "to worship." "They came up to worship at the feast."

I. The place they came up to was Hierusalem, and to the

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Temple there; which being then the only place upon earth dedicated to the service of the most High God, by His own appointment, it was, upon that account, the best and highest place upon earth, all other places being much inferior to it. And therefore whatsoever country or city these Greeks came from, they might be truly said, as they are here, to "come up," as to an higher place, when they came to the Temple at Hierusalem.

And it is very observable, that these Greeks, acknowledging the true God, could not but know withal, that He being every where present, they might have performed the same worship to Him in any other place, which they did at Hierusalem. And yet, how far soever they dwelt off, they still came thither to do it. And the reason was, because their very going to worship *there*, was a professing their acknowledgment of the God which was *there* worshipped. And besides that, they knew that God had promised to meet them, and to bless them in such places where His name was recorded, in a more especial manner than in any other place; in that He had said, "In all places where I record My name I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee." From whence they could not but conclude it to be their interest as well as duty to go to Hierusalem to worship, that being the only place at that time where God had recorded His name, and, by consequence, where He had appointed to come unto them, and to bless them.

Exod. 20. 24.

And certainly this promise was never intended only for the Old Testament, or the Temple then standing; for it runs in general terms, "In all places where I record My name." And he must have very mean thoughts of Christ and His Gospel who can suffer himself to be persuaded that the name of God is not "recorded" in our Christian Churches, as well as it was in the Jewish Tabernacle or Temple. For this is to prefer the Law before the Gospel, and to make the condition of the Jews much better than that of Christians: forasmuch as they always had some place or other among them, where God had promised to come unto them, and so to be especially present with them, and to bless them; whereas, according to this opinion, we have none. But he that rightly considers the nature and design of the Gospel, must needs

acknowledge, that as it excels the Law in many particulars, it comes short of it in none; much less in this, which is of so great importance. But that whatsoever it was whereby the name of God is said to be "recorded" among the Jews, the same is in as high, if not in a much higher manner, among us at this time; and howsoever it was that God was "specially present" in such places then, without all doubt He is so still.

What it is that constitutes the *Shechinah*, or Special Presence of God in places that are consecrated to Him, and so to have His name recorded in them, it is not necessary for us to determine. I know it hath been the received opinion of late, that it is the attendance of the Holy Angels there that doth it, and do not question but they are as certainly present in our Christian Churches as ever they were in the Temple at Hierusalem, for that St. Paul himself assures us of. But God is not therefore said to be present in such places because the Angels are so; but the Angels are therefore present there, because He is so in a more especial manner there than elsewhere. And the specialty of His presence seems rather to consist in those special discoveries which He is pleased to make of Himself, and those special blessings and assistances which God the Holy Ghost vouchsafeth to His people, in such places where His name is recorded. Hence, several of the learned Rabbins, by the *Shechinah* understand the Holy Ghost. But I ground not this opinion upon any Rabbinical notions, but upon the words of St. Paul, where he saith, "Know ye not that ye are the Temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" From whence it is evident, that it is the inhabitation of the Spirit which makes a place a temple of God, a place of His special residence. And therefore as the Spirit is said to dwell in the real saints, because He actuates, influences, and assists them in what they do; so is He said to dwell in a Church or Temple, because He is there always ready to bestow His special grace and assistance, even all manner of Spiritual blessings, upon all such as come thither rightly disposed to perform their devotions to Him. Which seems also to the purport of the promise itself, "In all places where I record My name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee;" that is, I will so come unto thee, as to bless

[1 Cor. 11. 10.]

1 Cor. 3. 16.

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thee in a more especial manner than in any other place. And then it is no wonder that the Holy Angels, according to the general sense of Scripture and antiquity, are always present in such places, to admire the goodness of their Lord and Master to His creatures here below, and to be ready upon all occasions to distribute such blessings as they are capable of conveying to them. As we see in the story of the Eunuch, treasurer to Candace, Queen of the Æthiopians; who having been to worship at the Temple, an Angel was presently sent to order Philip to go and meet the said Eunuch, and to bring him into the Church, that he might be saved.

[Acts 8. 26-40.]

But we need not trouble ourselves with such nice speculations about it. It is sufficient for our present purpose that the most High God, according to His own promise, and the sense and experience of His Church in all ages, is present in all such places where His name is recorded, in a more especial and peculiar manner than He is elsewhere. For hence it is, that pious Christians always frequented such places as were dedicated to the service of God, and so had His name recorded in them. Hence it was, that heretofore they were so zealous and forward to erect and dedicate such places. They needed not in the primitive times, as we do now, the edicts of Emperors, or acts of Parliament, for the building of Churches; their own piety and zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of men prompted them sufficiently to it. Hence also it is, that the very setting apart and consecrating of such places for the service and worship of God was always reckoned, and truly is, a very great act of religion, in that we thereby demonstrate our acknowledgment of His power and sovereignty over us, of His love and goodness to us, and likewise of His right and propriety in what we have, in that we pay Him tribute, and do Him homage for it, by devoting some part of that land or estate that He hath given us, unto Him of whom we hold the whole. Hence, lastly it was, that the Greeks in my text came up to Hierusalem, that so they might worship God in His own house, the proper place where His public worship should be performed, and where nothing else should be performed but what hath relation thereunto. So that the same acts, which in other places

may be acts only of civil respect to men, when performed in the Church to God, they become acts of religious worship unto Him.

II. The next thing to be considered, is the time when these Greeks came up to worship; at the Feast, that is, the Passover, as the context sheweth: as if they did not think it enough to worship God at any other place, but they came up to the Temple to do it *there;* so neither did they think it enough to worship him at any other time, but they came up at the Feast to do it *then:* as knowing that time and place, though they be but circumstances, they are necessary circumstances of religious worship, and therefore appointed by God Himself; who commands that a due respect shall be given to both: "Ye shall keep My Sabbaths, and reverence My sanctuary." Indeed, take away all distinction betwixt holy and common times and places, and what would become of religion in the world? If no places were set apart where men should worship God, they would do it nowhere; and, if no times, they would never do it. Hence it is that God, and under Him the Church, in all ages, hath taken special care, that as some part of the earth which we live upon, so some part of the time also that we live in it, should be devoted wholly to Him who gives it to us. And they that would keep their hearts always in an holy frame and temper, must make conscience of observing such times, as well as places, that are set apart for these holy purposes: as the Greeks here did, who "came up to worship at the feast." Levit.19.30.

III. But that which I chiefly design to speak to is the business they came about; they "came up to worship." To worship! what is that? Did they come to love God, to fear Him, to trust on Him, or the like? No surely, they did all this at home; at least they were bound to do it in all places, and at all times, as well as at Hierusalem, upon the Feast-day. And besides, these being acts purely of the soul, and so confined within their own breasts, none could take notice of them, but God and their own consciences; whereas, to all religious worship it is plainly necessary that there be some overt act, whereby these inward motions of the soul to God may be discovered and represented unto others. But did they come then to hear God's Word? I do not doubt

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but they had the Law or Prophets read, and perhaps expounded to them. And so far as that was the means whereby they learned how to worship God aright, it had some relation to it. But the Scriptures plainly distinguish betwixt reading or hearing of God's Word and worshipping of Him. For it is written, that "they spent one fourth part of the day in reading in the Book of Law, and another fourth part in confessing and worshipping the Lord their God." From whence it appears, that these were two several duties, performed at several times of the day.

Neh. 9. 3.

But what then did they come to do? Did they come to pray, or to praise God? Questionless they did. The place they came to was called "the House of Prayer;" that being the great work it was designed for. Neither can it be denied but these are such acts, without which it is impossible to worship God aright. But yet in the place last mentioned, although they "confessed" (under which is comprehended both prayer and praise) and "worshipped" both at the same time, yet these are reckoned as two distinct duties. And, indeed, the worshipping of God, properly so called, doth not consist so much in these acts themselves, as in the way and manner of performing them.

[Is. 56. 7.]

But then the question is, how this must be done? After what manner these Greeks did it, and how we ought to carry ourselves in all our addresses to the most High God, so as that we may be properly said to worship Him? Which being a question that concerns Almighty God Himself, and His worship and honour, I shall not undertake to resolve it by my own reason or judgment, but shall consult His holy oracles, where we have many things which singly, much more jointly considered, will fully discover His will and pleasure to us in this particular. First, therefore, we may observe, that the Holy Ghost never useth any word whereby to express that worship which is due to God, but what signifies such humble gestures of our bodies before Him, which may express our awe and fear of Him. There are but two words that I know of in all the Hebrew tongue that are used to denote the worship of the true God, or are ever so translated into other languages; and they are בָּרַךְ and הִשְׁתַּחֲוָה, whereof the first signifies "falling" down in ge-

neral; the other "bowing, or prostrating ourselves before Him:" and so they are commonly translated, as well as by "worshipping." The same may be said of the Greek word προσκυνέω, so often used in the New Testament, and particularly in my text. From whence we may clearly see what the Holy Ghost means by worshipping God: for how can we know His mind better than by the words whereby He declareth it? But He always expresseth the "worship of God" by such words as signify our "bowing or prostrating ourselves" before Him: and therefore we may certainly conclude, it is His mind and pleasure that we should always perform our worship to God by such humble gestures as these are.

In the next place, we may observe, that the most High God doth expressly forbid us to bow down to any image or idol; as in the Second Commandment: "Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth: thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them." But why should He forbid us to do this to an image or idol, if it be not an essential part of that worship which is due to Himself? Or what can be more plain, than that He commands us to bow down to Himself, in that He forbids our doing it to any thing else instead of Himself? And besides, it is acknowledged by all, that He who bows to an idol is, by virtue of this commandment, guilty of idolatry, in that he worships that idol; which could not be, unless bowing itself be an act of religious worship due to the true God.

Moreover, we may observe, that the Holy Ghost, that we might not be mistaken in a matter of so great importance, doth often explain Himself what He means by worshipping God: As David, inspired by Him, cries out, "O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker." Where "bowing" and "kneeling" are plainly added, to express the several postures to be used when we worship. So also, where He tells us how the saints of old were wont to worship God. Ps. 95. 6.

As for example; when Abraham's servant perceived that God had prospered his journey, it is said, "And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the Lord." When Gen. 24. 26.

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the children of Israel understood God's purpose to deliver
Exod. 4. 31. them out of Egypt, then "they bowed their heads and worshipped." When God appeared to Moses, and pro-
Exod. 34. 8. claimed His glory, it is said, "And Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped." When Job had heard the several messages that were brought him,
Job 1. 20. concerning God's dealing with him, it is said, "Then Job arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground and worshipped." But the Scripture is so full of such expressions that it would be tedious to repeat all the places where they occur; but I cannot omit that where it
Neh. 8. 6. is said, "Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands; and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." From whence it is as plain as words can make it, that this was the ancient way of worshipping God.

But some perhaps may say, that these instances are only out of the Old Testament, and therefore may not concern us now. To which I answer, that most of them were before the Levitical Law was made, neither was this ever commanded in that law, which was to expire with Christ; but is grounded upon the Law of Nature, and inserted into the body of the Moral Law, as I observed before. Howsoever, to put the matter out of doubt, we have as pregnant instances of it in the New Testament, as in the Old. For the wise men that came from the East, when they had found out
Matt. 2. 11. our Lord, "they fell down and worshipped Him." When Satan had shewed our Saviour all the kingdoms of the
Matt. 4. 9, 10. world, and tempted Him, saying, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me;" our Lord answered, "Get thee hence, Satan, it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve." Where it is manifest, that our Saviour by worship means that kind of worship which the Devil would have had performed to him, even by "falling down before him."

Thus it was that our Lord Himself was often "worshipped," as we read in the Holy Gospels: for St. Matthew
Matt. 8. 2. saith, that a certain "leper came to him and worshipped him." And how he did it, St. Mark acquaints us, saying,

that "he kneeled down to Him." From whence it appears, that "kneeling down and worshipping," in the sense of the Evangelists, is one and the same thing. So also St. Matthew again saith, that Jairus "worshipped" our Lord. St. Mark and St. Luke say, that "he fell down at Jesus' feet." Mark 1. 40. Matt. 9. 18. Mark 5. 22. Luke 8. 41.

And indeed it was after the same manner, that Christ himself worshipped in the garden. For St. Luke saith, that "he kneeled down and prayed;" St. Matthew, that "he fell on his face;" St. Mark, that "he fell on the ground and prayed." Which shews that He used all these several postures in the worshipping of His Father: nay, it is much to be observed, that the last act that our Saviour did before His death upon the cross, was an act of worship in this sense: for St. John saith, that "He bowed down His head and gave up the ghost." And seeing our blessed Lord, both in His life, and at the very point of death, worshipped after this manner, it cannot be imagined but that His Apostles did so too: and therefore we find St. Paul "kneeling" at his prayers upon the sea-shore, and St. Stephen, when the stones were flying about his ears. Which certainly he would not have done at such a time, if it had been a mere ceremony, and not a necessary part of religious worship. Luke 22. 41. Matt. 26. 39. Mark 14. 35. John 19. 30. Acts 21. 5. Acts 7. 60.

Hence, when Cornelius supposing St. Peter to be more than a man, "fell down at his feet to worship him," St. Peter took him up, saying, "Stand up, I myself also am a man." As if he should have said, This is the worship which is due to God, and therefore not to be performed after this manner to me, who am only a man. So also when St. John, supposing the angel that spake to him to be Christ Himself, "fell down at his feet to worship him;" the angel forbade him, saying, "See thou do it not, for I am thy fellow-servant; worship God:" *i. e.* worship God, and Him only, after this manner, as thou wouldst have worshipped me, even by falling down before Him. Acts 10. 25, 26. Apoc. 19. 10. [Chap. 22. 9.]

But we need no other arguments to prove that this was the notion which the Apostles had of religious worship, than the testimony of St. Paul, which makes it clear and undeniable. For he, speaking of Christian assemblies, and of praying and prophesying there in a known tongue, saith, that if one come among them, and hears them prophesying 1 Cor. 14. 24, 25.

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in a known tongue, "the secrets of his heart will be made manifest, and so, falling down on his face, he will worship God." For how was it possible for the Apostle to declare his sense of "religious worship" more fully and clearly than he hath done in these words, which so plainly teach us, that he who would worship God aright must fall down, or use some such reverential posture before Him?

Having thus discovered the mind of the Holy Ghost in Scripture, concerning the way and manner of "worshipping God," I might now proceed to shew, that this is not my own private opinion, nor the judgment of our own or any other particular Church only, but that it hath been the sense of the "Catholic Church," in all places and ages since the Apostles' times; and that her practice hath always been accordingly. But we need not appeal to the practice of the "Church Militant," having the example of the "Church Triumphant" itself for it. For in the visions which St. John

Apoc. 4. 10. had of what is done in Heaven, we read, that "the twenty-four Elders fall down before Him that sits on the throne, and worship Him that liveth for ever and ever." And that

Chap. 7. 11. all the Angels stood round about the throne, and "fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God." And so frequently elsewhere. And if those pure and spotless creatures, the spirits of just men made perfect, and the Holy Angels themselves, worship the most High God with so much reverence and humility; what cause have we poor mortals upon earth to do so? Especially considering, that we hope ere long to be admitted into their society, and to do as they do for ever. And therefore, we had need to imitate them as well as we can before-hand; that so when we come amongst them, we may not think it any new or strange thing, much less superstition, as some do. For they who go out of this world, with their minds possessed with an opinion that to bow or cringe (as they profanely call it, in derision) before Almighty God is superstition, are very unfit to go to Heaven: nay, their very consciences would not suffer them to go thither, if they might, for fear of being guilty of superstition, if they should conform to the discipline and orders of the Church that is there established. But let them indulge such foolish and profane conceits, if they please, and see

what will be the issue of it at long run. Let us, who hope to go to Heaven, begin to worship God here, as we hope to do it there for ever; even by using all such humble and awful gestures before Him, which may testify our acknowledgment of His presence with us, of His greatness and sovereignty over us, and of His goodness and mercy to us.

He that impartially considers the promises, so plainly laid down in the Holy Scriptures, cannot but from thence conclude, that to the right performance of that duty, which is properly called "the worship of God," it is necessary that we "bow the head," or "knee," or "whole body," or use some such "outward sign and expression of fear and reverence before Him." And that as such gestures, when used to a prince or parent upon earth, are a sign of that civil respect which is due unto them from their subjects or children; so the same, when done to the Creator of the world, are really acts of that religious worship which is due from His creatures to Him.

But after all, I must observe unto you, there is one thing still behind, without which all this will signify nothing. That ye may the better understand what this is, I desire you to call to mind our Saviour's words, "God is a spirit, and they that worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth." I know these words have been produced of late, to prove that no external worship is now required of us, and that several learned men have taken off the argument several ways. But, I cannot but admire, how it first came into any man's thoughts to imagine, that our Saviour should here condemn external worship: He saith indeed, that we must "worship God in the spirit;" but doth it follow therefore, that we must not worship him in the body too? Did not He Himself perform external worship unto God? Did not He bow His head, His knees, yea, His whole body before Him, when He prayed to Him? Did not His Apostles and Disciples do so too, as I have shewed before? How then can it be imagined, that He should condemn that which He Himself practised, and taught others also to do?

John 4. 24.

[John 19. 30.]

But it is plain, that our Saviour is so far from speaking against external worship in these words, that He only teacheth us how to perform it aright. "God," saith He, "is

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a spirit," and therefore they that "worship Him," must not put Him off, as the Jews and Samaritans, of whom He there speaks, were wont to do, with "bodily worship only;" but they must "worship Him in spirit" too, and by consequence "in truth," that being the only "true worship" which is thus performed by the whole man, by the body and the spirit both, unto Him that made them both. So that this seems to be the same in effect with that expression of David, "In Thy fear will I worship towards Thy Holy Temple," that is, I will not only bow my head or body, directing myself, at the same time, towards Thy Holy Temple, but I will do it in the fear and dread of Thy Divine Majesty; which also is implied in the very notion of worship: for that being only a sign or expression of our sense and fear of God, there cannot be any real sign or expression of it, and therefore no true worship. So that to our worshipping of God in truth, it is absolutely necessary, that the several motions of our bodies before Him, proceed from, and be attended with, suitable motions of the soul and spirit towards Him.

Ps. 5. 7.

And thus indeed it was, that pious and devout persons have been always wont to worship God: I could give you many instances of it, both in the Old and New Testament. To pass by others, I before observed, how Job, understanding God's pleasure towards him, fell down upon the ground, and worshipped before Him: but did not he worship in his soul as well as body? Yes surely, for as he lay thus prostrate before God, he said, "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord." From whence it is plain, that the prostration of his body before God was attended with an equal submission of his spirit to Him. Thus our Lord describes two men going up to the Temple to pray, the one a Pharisee, the other a Publican; "The Pharisee," saith He, "stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank Thee, that I am not as other men," &c. From whence we may observe, that he used no reverence at all, but talked proudly and malapertly to Almighty God; and therefore our Saviour doth not say, that he prayed to God, but that he prayed "with himself," or as it is in the Greek, πρὸς ἑαυτὸν, he prayed 'to himself.'

Job 1. 21.

But the Publican "standing afar off," and signifying thereby his unworthiness to approach to God, "would not lift up so much as his eyes to Heaven;" but fixing them upon the earth, which he could not do without bowing down his head, in this humble worshipping posture, "he smote upon his breast," saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner;" Luke 18. 13, 14. which shews, that, as his outward carriage before God was humble and reverent, so was his spirit too. And therefore our Saviour saith, that "this man went to his house justified rather than the other;" that is, this man's prayer and worship was accepted, the other's not.

Thus also it was, that our Lord Himself worshipped God in spirit and in truth, according to His own words: for at the same time that His body lay prostrate before His Father in the garden, His soul was submitting itself to Him; "Father," saith He, "if it be possible, let this cup Mat. 26. 39. pass from me: nevertheless, not My will, but Thine be done." So He did too when He was upon the cross; for St. John, [19. 30.] as I observed, saith, "He bowed His head and gave up the ghost." And St. Luke saith, that "He cried with a loud Luke 23. 46. voice, saying, Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit; and having said thus, He gave up the ghost." From whence it is evident, that at the same time that He bowed His head, He likewise commended His spirit into the hands of God, and so worshipped Him both in body and spirit too.

Thus also it is, that the glorified saints and Angels in Heaven are represented to us as worshipping God there; for as they fall down before Him, so at the same time they cry out, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and Apoc. 4. 11. honour, and power; for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created:" And elsewhere, having declared God's goodness to His Church, in delivering her from her enemies, they fell down and worshipped, saying, "Amen, Allelujah." And this certainly is Chap. 19. 4. to worship God in spirit and in truth, when the soul at the same time is so inflamed with love unto Him, and so full of the sense of His goodness and power, that it breaks forth into praises and Allelujahs to Him.

Thus, lastly, it is, that the Catholic Church upon earth

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hath always observed this rule of our blessed Saviour. But I shall instance only in the Greek and Syriac Churches: in the Greek they have their ordinary "bowings," which they properly call προσκυνήματα, 'worshippings;' and their extraordinary, which they call μετανοίας: which are of two sorts, the lesser and the greater; the lesser are, when they bow their heads only to the ground; the greater, when they lie prostrate upon it. Now, whensoever they perform any such external worship with their bodies, their souls or spirits are likewise employed in it: for we find in their public service, that when they make their three ordinary bows, they often say the τρισάγιον, and bow at each part of it; Ἅγιος ὁ Θέος, Ἅγιος Ἰσχυρός, Ἅγιος Ἀθάνατος, ἐλέησον ἡμᾶς, 'Holy God, Holy Almighty, Holy Immortal God, have mercy upon us.' When they come first into the chancel or choir, and make their three bows towards the east, they repeat the words of the Publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner." Afterwards when they bow, they sometimes use the words of the [Ps. 18. 1.] Psalmist, "I will love Thee, O Lord my strength, the Lord is my support and my refuge." Sometimes they say, [Ps. 51. 15.] "Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall shew forth Thy praise:" Sometimes the *Gloria Patri*, which is never said without worshipping the most Blessed Trinity, that is glorified in it. And as for the Syriac Church, there is a Liturgy used in Syria, Chaldea, and all the places thereabouts, which is all in the Syriac tongue, except the Rubrics, which are Arabic; in this I find, that the Priest, when he goes to the altar, makes his bow, and saith, "I am come into Thy house, O God, and worship before Thy throne. O King of Heaven, forgive me all that I have sinned against Thee."

Litur. Syr. p. 2.

And this, as might be easily shewn, hath been the constant practice and custom of the Church in all ages and places. So that as Christians durst never, till our days, pray to Almighty God, without either kneeling or bowing, or using some posture of adoration before Him; so they never used any such posture, but they still lifted up their hearts and spirits to Him. And this was always reputed the "true worshipping" of God; or, as our Saviour words it, the "worshipping of Him in spirit and in truth." For

[John 4. 24.]

as where the Apostle saith, that he "will sing with the spirit, and he will sing with the understanding also," and that we should "sing and make melody in our hearts to the Lord," He doth not thereby forbid the use of our voices in singing (without which, there cannot be properly any singing at all), but only requires, that our hearts should go along with them: so when our Saviour saith that we should "worship in the spirit," He doth not thereby forbid the using of any bodily gestures (without which, there cannot be properly any worshipping at all), but only requires that our spirits go along with our bodies in the performance of it. For as no man can be said to worship God at all, that doth not worship Him with his body; so no man can be said to worship Him in truth, that doth not worship in his spirit also. 1Cor.14.15. Eph. 5. 19.

Now these things being thus laid down, it is easy to determine what the Greeks in my text did, when "they came up to worship at the feast." For we cannot but suppose that they did the work they came about, that is, they went to the Temple, the House of the most High God, and there believing and apprehending Him to be, according to His promise, specially present, they bowed their heads, or prostrated themselves upon their knees or faces before Him; and in this humble posture they confessed their sins, and implored His mercy in the pardon of them, and His grace to forsake them, acknowledging Him to be the Almighty Creator and Governor of the world, and that they had nothing but what they received from His bounty and goodness; or something to that purpose. For this was properly to worship God, according to the true sense of the word, as used in Scripture, and interpreted by the practice of the Universal Church.

Thus I have endeavoured to explain the ancient and true notion of "Religious Worship;" which, if seriously considered, would contribute very much, as to the advancement of God's glory, so likewise to the settlement of His Church among us, and to the defending of it against its adversaries on both sides. For as for the Sectaries, who inveigh so much against these solemn gestures prescribed by our Church to be observed in the worship of God, they must

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needs be convinced of their error, when they consider, that such gestures are necessary to be observed in the worshipping of God, whether they were ever prescribed by any Church or no; and that whensoever they condemn us for the using of them, they do with the same breath condemn the Patriarchs, the Prophets, the Apostles, the Martyrs, the whole Catholic Church, both Militant and Triumphant; yea, and Christ Himself the Head of it, who used them as well as we.

And as for the Papists, from this Catholic notion of religious worship, it is easy to observe, that they have little or nothing of it among them: forasmuch as all their public services being performed in a language the people do not understand, whatsoever outward gestures they use, it is impossible they should worship God together in spirit, as they ought to do. And besides, although they often bow or kneel, it is usually to some image or picture, and so they worship that instead of God, directly contrary to His commandment. I know the learned among them pretend, that although they bow to images, they do not intend to worship them, but God only: but they may pretend what they please, I am sure God Himself doth not speak one word of directing their intentions one way or other, but only of bowing to images, "Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them." And therefore if they do that, be their intentions what they will, be sure they do that which He hath plainly forbidden.

Rom. 2. 22.

But what doth the Apostle say, "Thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege?" We who abhor the worshipping of images and idols, shall we rob God of the worship that is due to Him? God forbid. If bowing be no act of religious worship, why do we blame others for giving it to images? If it be, why do we not give it to Almighty God? And yet of all the duties required in our holy religion, what is more commonly neglected by some, and derided by others, than this is? Which plainly shews, that for all the great talk they make of religion, it is but talk; they are not in good earnest about it, nor have that sense of God upon their minds, which is the ground and foundation of it. For if they had, it would be impossible for them not to ex-

press it all the ways they can; especially this way, which is so natural, that they who do not express their sense of God by it, have just cause to suspect, that they have none at all to express.

For, as for instance, we are now in the special presence of that supreme and all-glorious Being, which we call God, and we shall presently make our solemn addresses again to Him. Now let any one but consider who it is before whom he is, and to whom he then speaks, how pure, how holy, how great, how mighty, how infinite He is in all perfection; and withal, let him by faith, as it is the evidence of things [Heb.11.1.] not seen, behold and apprehend this Almighty Being, as specially present, according to His Word: let any man, I say, that hath any fear of God upon his heart, but do this; and then let him forbear to manifest it in his outward behaviour if he can. For my part, I think it to be impossible; especially considering, that as God hath promised that where His name is recorded He will come unto us and bless us; so our Blessed Saviour hath said, "Where two or Matt.18.20. three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." From whence I cannot but believe, that He is as really in the midst of us at this time, as that we ourselves are here. But is Christ, whom the Angels themselves worship, is He in the midst of us, and do we not worship Him? Is it possible for us, firmly to believe, and clearly to apprehend, the eternal God our Saviour to be here present, and yet express no reverence or respect to Him, neither when we come into His presence, nor when we go out of it, nor while we are in it, and hear His blessed name mentioned to put us in mind of it? No, nor when we take the boldness to speak unto Him neither? Surely it cannot be. For such a faith and sense as this would naturally operate so much upon our minds, that we could not choose but fall upon our knees, or bow down before Him, and so worship Him both in soul and body too.

This therefore being the most ancient, the most proper, and, as I may truly say, the most natural way of worshipping God, who can but wish it was revived and universally received among us? Of what mighty advantage would it be, both to ourselves, to the whole Church, and kingdom

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also? For by this means we should effectually obtain whatsoever good things we thus humbly desire at the hands of God, as the fathers have frequently observed. By this means also we should very much excite both our own and each other's affections towards God, when we meet to perform our devotions to Him. For it is St. Augustin's observation, that as all such motions of the body, whereby we worship God, proceed from the inward affections of our souls to Him; so those inward affections themselves are increased by such motions (*Aug. de curâ gerendâ pro Mort.* c. 5). And none of us but may observe the same from our own experience, that the more humble and devout we are in worshipping God, the more are our own affections raised, and our souls enflamed towards Him: how much more, when we see all about us testifying their acknowledgment of God's greatness, power, and sovereignty over them, in the same reverent and solemn manner that we ourselves do it?

[Tom. vi. parti.p.520. B.]

Moreover, this would be the most effectual way whereby to lay that spirit of schism and sedition, of profaneness and irreligion, which is gone out amongst us. For by this means God Himself would delight to dwell amongst us, and then that wicked, that turbulent, and seditious spirit would soon flee from us? And by this means also men's minds would be so over-awed with the fear of God, and fortified with such strong and lively apprehensions of Him, that they could never be prevailed upon, either to leave or deride that Church, wherein they are taught and required to worship God so purely and devoutly as they are in ours.

Neither would this conduce only to the peace and quiet of the Church, but of the kingdom too. For this would keep up a sense of religion among us; and then as men would fear God, they would honour the Queen too. But so long as people express no reverence to the God of Heaven, how can it be expected they should shew any to their superiors on earth? And therefore it is very observable, that one of the first steps the Devil made, in order to the disposing men's minds for the late horrid rebellion, was to take them off from bowing or kneeling, or using any external reverence in their prayers to God; as well know-

ing, that when that was once done, they would soon cast off all sense of their duty and allegiance to the King, as we afterwards found they did by woeful experience. Whereas they who constantly worship God aright, according to the rules and orders of our Church, by their frequent and humble addresses to Him, have their minds continually possessed with such an awe and dread of His greatness and power, that they dare not for their lives oppose it in those to whom He hath committed any part of it, and so hath made them His vicegerents upon earth.

But I must remember, that we come not hither only to hear, but to do what we have now heard; that is, to worship God, and that we are to do it now at His holy Table: wherefore, that I may detain you no longer from it, I shall say no more, but only add, that could we be all persuaded constantly to perform this great duty, with that humility and submission both of mind and body that we ought, as we should always live in the true fear of God, while we are upon earth, so we should be always ready and prepared to go to Heaven, where we hope to do that to all eternity, which we have now been speaking of; even worship and adore the Almighty Creator of the world, in and through His Son our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and worship given of us, and of all the creatures in Heaven and earth, from this time forth for evermore. Amen.

SERMON VI.

A FORM OF SOUND WORDS TO BE USED BY MINISTERS.

2 Timothy i. 13.

Hold fast the form of sound words which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus.

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Although we are apt to wonder most at such things as seldom happen in the world, yet certainly the most common and obvious things that be, if duly considered, deserve as much, if not much more, to be admired by us. What more common to all mankind, and yet what more strange and wonderful, than that by certain sounds in the air, or by certain characters upon solid bodies, we should be able to discover our thoughts to one another? Thoughts, we know, are the immanent acts of the soul, a spiritual being, and so not capable of any external representations; and yet for all that, we can make such sounds and figures, utter such words, and write such letters, from whence other persons may understand what we think as well as we ourselves. And this indeed is the foundation of all human society and conversation: for by this means we can communicate our hopes and fears, our joys and griefs, our desires and abhorrences, all our sentiments and notions, to one another; yea, by this means we can converse with the ancients, and know what they thought that lived above a thousand years ago. Of so great use are words, whether spoken or written, to mankind!

And yet as nothing may be more easily, so nothing hath been more grossly, abused than they; for though we can frame ideas and notions of things in our minds, without any relation unto, or dependence upon words, yet having been

all along accustomed to express our thoughts by them, we are apt to be more intent upon words than we are upon things themselves; and so to accommodate and suit our notions to words, rather than words unto our notions. So that whatsoever words we commonly use, whereby to express such or such things, our apprehensions of these things are according to the words whereby we are wont to express them: if they be false, our apprehensions being regulated by them cannot possibly be true; and if they be true, and rightly understood by us, our apprehensions cannot possibly be false, being bound up, as it were, and confined within the sense and meaning of such words. But it being very hard and difficult to find out fit and proper words in any language, whereby fully and distinctly to express the nature of things and our own ideas of them, most men, to save themselves the labour of a further search, take up with the first they meet with, especially if they be but generally received: which if they happen to be false, as they frequently are, they infallibly lead them into false conceptions and erroneous opinions of the things themselves. And therefore it cannot but highly concern us all to be very cautious and wary in the choice of our words, especially in Divinity, where every mistake is dangerous, and many damnable.

This therefore being a matter of so great importance, much greater than it is commonly thought of, it may justly challenge to be the subject of our present discourse: for which end I have chosen these words of St. Paul to Timothy, "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus."

Where we may observe three things:—

First, That some time before the writing of this epistle, St. Paul had given to Timothy a form of sound words, though not in writing, yet by word of mouth. This is plain, in that he saith, "A form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me." Timothy was now ordained Bishop of Ephesus, the metropolis of all Asia Proconsularis, whither the Apostle sent him to preach and propagate the Gospel; and that he might rightly understand the principles of that religion which he was to preach, and cause others to do so too, the Apostle puts words into his mouth, such as would

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clearly and properly express the great truths, which he was mostly to insist upon; which he therefore calls ὑγιαίνοντας λόγους, "sound words," such as would make his hearers to be *sanæ mentis*, men of sound judgment and right notions in the mysteries of religion. And whosoever doth not consent to those *sound* and wholesome *words*, the same Apostle elsewhere saith, "That such a one is a fool, knowing nothing," ἀλλὰ νοσῶν; but he is sick, as the word signifies, or as our translation hath it, "He doats about questions and strifes of words." As if a malignant fever had affected his brain, distracted his mind, and made him delirious, so as to rave and talk nonsense. For so all do that use any other than right and proper words in the mysteries of our religion; whatsoever they say, is nonsense, if not downright blasphemy. Hence it is that the Apostle so often makes mention of sound doctrine, in opposition to the extravagant and corrupt opinions which false teachers, even in those days, instilled into the minds of their ignorant and unwary disciples. And lest Timothy, through any mistake or inadvertency, should fall himself, or lead others into the same errors, St. Paul, before he sent him to preach the Gospel, furnished him with such a form of sound words, which if he did but constantly observe, he could neither be deceived nor deceive.

1 Tim. 6. 4.

Secondly, We may observe, that this form of sound words was both in "faith and love, which is in Christ Jesus;" that is, both concerning the doctrine and the discipline, what we are to believe, and what to do, in obedience to the Gospel of Christ. For as faith comprehends the one, so doth love the other; and St. Paul had given Timothy a form of sound words in both: but first in faith, and then in love, because it is faith that works by love; and he that doth not rightly believe, can never truly obey the Gospel of Christ as he ought to do. But in one as well as the other, St. Paul instructed Timothy how to express himself, and by that means hath admonished us also to be very careful how to speak, what words we use, whether in theoretical or practical Divinity, concerning either faith or manners.

[Gal. 5. 6.]

Lastly, St. Paul did not think it enough, to give Timothy a form of sound words, but he chargeth him to hold it fast, to keep it, to use no other words, but such as exactly agreed

with those which he had taught him. The Greek words are ὑποτύπωσιν ἔχε τῶν ὑγιαινόντων λόγων, where the ὑποτύπωσις is variously rendered by interpreters. I shall not trouble you with any critical observations about it; but only observe in general, that it is sometimes used for a pattern or example, sometimes for a short description, or delineation, or summary, or compendium. Thus Clemens Alexandrinus wrote a book, which he called ὑποτυπώσεις, which Photius saith, was a brief exposition of the Old and New Testament; out of which the Ἐπιτομαὶ ἐκ τοῦ Θεοδότου at the end of his works, I suppose, were taken. And in this sense, the word here used intimates as if St. Paul had given Timothy, if not that which we call the Apostles' Creed, yet some suchlike form of sound words, containing the sum and substance of what he was to believe and preach. 1 Tim. 1. 16.

But the Apostle lays no great stress upon that word. For it follows, "hold fast the form of sound words," ὧν παρ' ἐμοῦ ἤκουσας, ὧν not ἧς, which words, not which form thou hast heard of me. So that it is not so much the form as the words themselves, which the Apostle would have him to hold fast, to have them continually in his mind, and in his mouth too, whensoever he speaks of those Divine truths which are revealed to us in the Gospel.

What these sound words were, which Timothy heard of St. Paul, we know not: but this we know, that it doth as much concern us to use sound words in matters of divinity, as it did him. And therefore having not heard them at St. Paul's own mouth, as he did, it may not be amiss, if we consider of the most certain way to find them out, that we may know how to express ourselves in all the Articles of our Christian faith, by such words as the Apostle here calls sound and wholesome, such as will give us and those we speak to, occasion to frame right notions and conceptions of those things which belong to our everlasting peace.

For this end therefore, I shall in the first place lay down this as a most certain and undeniable truth, that the Scriptures, as being indited by the Spirit of God, in the languages wherein they were first written, do contain the best and soundest words that possibly could be invented, whereby to express such truths as are necessary for mankind to

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believe or know. For they being designed on purpose to be the rule both of our faith and manners, and contrived for that end, by infinite wisdom and goodness itself, it cannot be imagined, but that every thing is there expressed, in the most plain and perspicuous, the most fit and proper, the most full and significant words that could be desired of Almighty God, whereby to discover Himself and His will to our capacities; to which of His infinite mercy He is pleased to condescend, in all these books which are acknowledged by all Christians to be written by men inspired, moved, assisted, and directed in what they wrote, by the Spirit of God Himself. By which means the whole Scripture is indeed but as one continued form of sound words; which if we do but hold fast and understand aright, we can neither fall either into Heresy or Schism. And whatsoever words we use in the mysteries of our religion, are either true or false, sound or corrupt, as they do or do not agree with those which are used in that Holy Writ.

But in the next place, we must consider withal, that notwithstanding the extraordinary clearness and propriety of speech, whereby Divine truths are there revealed to us, yet there never was any error, heresy, or schism in the Church, but what was pretended by the authors and abettors of it to be grounded upon Scripture. In this all Heretics, Greek and Latin, old and new, agree. They all plead Scripture for what they say; and each one pretends that his opinion, be it ever so absurd and ridiculous, is consonant to the words there used: which though it may seem strange at first sight, we shall not much wonder at, if we do but consider three things.

First, That most men, not understanding the original languages, read and consult the Scriptures no otherwise than in some translation, which they notwithstanding look upon as the Word of God; and if there be any word in that translation that favours any erroneous opinion, they presently conclude that the Scriptures do so too, though they be as much against it as that translation is for it. As for example; in the first promulgation of the Gospel to mankind, God said to the serpent that beguiled our first parents, "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed," הוּא יְשׁוּפְךָ רֹאשׁ :

Gen. 3. 15.

"It," that is, "the seed of the woman," which is Christ, "shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise His heel;" as our translation rightly expounds it. But the vulgar Latin renders it, *Ipsa conteret caput tuum*, as if a woman should do it; which the Papists interpreting of the Virgin Mary, ascribe to her this great victory and triumph over Sin and Satan, and are taught to say in their addresses to her, *Adoro et benedico sanctissimos pedes tuos, quibus antiqui serpentis caput calcâsti.* There are many other absurd opinions as well as practices in that Church, which this one word hath been the occasion of. [Cf. Hieron. Tom. i. p. 4. not.]

Thus, where the Apostle speaking of marriage, saith, τὸ μυστήριον τοῦτο μέγα ἐστίν, the vulgar Latin again translates it, *Sacramentum hoc magnum est:* from whence they conclude matrimony to be a Sacrament, such a one as Baptism and the Lord's Supper. [Eph. 5. 32.]

Thus also immediately before His ascension, our Blessed Lord said to His Apostles, Πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτούς, which the vulgar Latin renders, *Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes, baptizantes eos:* which most of our modern European versions follow. And from hence I verily believe the error of the Anabaptists and Anti-pædobaptists took its first rise. For apprehending our Saviour to say, according to this translation, "Go ye and teach all nations, and then baptize them," they presently inferred, that persons ought first to be taught, and then baptized: and by consequence, that children not being capable of the former, cannot be so of the latter. But if they had understood and consulted the original, they would have found no such thing: for μαθητεύω never signifies to teach, but only to make a Disciple. And so the Syriac and other Oriental translations constantly render the word. And therefore it is observable, that in all the Eastern Churches this heresy was never heard of, nor any where else, but only in such places where the vulgar Latin prevailed: which plainly shews, that it was grounded at first only upon that false translation of the word μαθητεύσατε by *docete;* though afterwards they endeavoured to prove it from other places of Scripture, either translated, or at least falsely understood, as this is. Many instances of this nature might be pro- [Matt. 28. 19.]

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duced, to shew how false translations of the Scriptures have given the first occasion to draw such opinions from them, which are directly contrary to what is asserted in them. And when men have once espoused an opinion, whether it be true or false, they look upon themselves as obliged to maintain it.

Secondly, Although there be many, especially of late years, who are able to read and understand much of the original text, yet they also are to seek for the true meaning of many places. For besides the ἅπαξ λεγόμενα, many other words and phrases frequently occur, which cannot be fully understood, except we first know the rites and customs of the Jewish Church, consider the context and scope of the places where such words are used, compare one place with another, and observe many other rules requisite to the right interpretation of those holy oracles: which most men, by reason of their ignorance and sloth, are either unable or unwilling to do; and therefore are apt to take up with the first sense that offers itself, without giving themselves the trouble of a farther search.

Thus Clemens Alexandrinus observes of the heretics in his days, that they would quote Scripture indeed, but not in the sense which the context required, but would take here and there a word, and apply it to their own private opinions; not considering what is signified by it, ἀλλ' αὐτῇ ψιλῇ ἀποχρώμενοι τῇ λέξει, but abusing the naked word itself, by putting what sense they please upon it. The same may be observed of many in our days, who getting a Scripture word by the end, away they run with it, and never leave it, till they have forced some erroneous opinion or other from it: which therefore cannot be imputed to any obscurity or uncertainty in the Scriptures themselves, but to the darkness of men's minds, and the perverseness of their wills, that they either can not or will not take the pains to understand what is clearly revealed in them. And to this head most of the ancient and modern heresies may be referred.

[Strom. lib. vii. p. 891. line 23. ed. Potter. Oxon. 1715. Cf. Strom. l. iii. p. 529. line 3.]

Lastly, Although some do understand the words whereby it hath pleased Almighty God to reveal Himself and His pleasure to us, yet the things themselves signified by those words, are many of them so high, mysterious, and Divine,

that their finite and corrupt apprehensions are not able to reach them. And therefore disdaining to believe what they cannot comprehend, they detort those words from their true and proper, to such a sense as will suit with their understandings. Seeing they cannot apprehend so much as the words signify, they will make the words signify no more than they can apprehend.

This St. Peter observed in his days; where speaking of St. Paul, he saith, "As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own destruction." Where he plainly speaks, not of the words, but things themselves; for it is not ἐν αἷς, in which epistles, but ἐν οἷς, amongst which things in those epistles, there are δυσνόητα τινα, some things hard to be understood. 2 Pet. 3. 16.

Such are those great mysteries of the most Blessed Trinity, the divinity and incarnation of the Son of God, and the like; which are as plainly revealed in Scripture, as things of that nature could be; and yet many have had the impudence to deny them, only upon that account, because their reasons, forsooth, were not able to comprehend them. These are they who, Lucifer-like, aspire to be like God himself; "Who would measure the water in the hollow of their hands, and mete out the Heavens with a span; who would comprehend the dust of the earth in a measure, weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance:" nay, which is worse, they would measure Heaven by earth, eternity by time, God by themselves; and believe nothing of His infinite, eternal, incomprehensible essence, but what they can comprehend within the narrow compass of their own reason, although God Himself hath been pleased to affirm it: as if the testimony of God was not a stronger ground whereupon to build our most holy faith than human reason; which certainly hath nothing else to do in such mysteries but to search into the truth of the Divine Revelation, which being either supposed or proved, we have all the reason in the world to believe what is so revealed, whether we understand it or no. But these great masters of reason have so little of that which they so much pretend [Is. 40. 12.]

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to, as not to believe this: and therefore to make the Scriptures to speak nothing but what they can comprehend, that is, nothing but what themselves please, they rack every word, particle, and sentence, transpose the commas, alter the accents, violate all the rules of true construction; and then it is no wonder if they force the Scriptures to say, not what God, but what themselves would have them. And by this means it is, that the most pernicious and blasphemous of all heresies were first broached, which whosoever swallow down are certain to be poisoned and undone for ever.

Hence therefore we may observe, how that although the Scriptures contain none but sound and wholesome words, such as Timothy heard of St. Paul, yet such is the weakness of men's understandings, such the corruption of their judgments, such the perverseness of their wills, the disorder of their affections, and the pravity of their whole souls, that they extract poison from that which was intended for their food, draw error out of truth, heresy out of the Scriptures themselves, so as to learn to blaspheme God in His own words. But what then shall we do in this case? How can we be ever certain that the words we use in matters of religion be sound, and, by consequence, our opinions orthodox, and our sentiments of God and those eternal truths which He hath revealed to us, such as He Himself would have them? Why surely for this end it is necessary that we indulge not our own fancies, nor idolize our own private opinions, but "hold fast the form of sound words" delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures, in that sense which the Catholic Church in all ages hath put upon them.

For the eternal Son of God having with His own blood purchased to Himself an Universal Church, we cannot doubt but that He takes sure care of it, that, according to His promise, "the gates of hell shall never prevail against it." [Matt. 16. 18.] For which end, He, the head of this mystical body, doth not only defend and protect it by His Almighty power, but He so acts, guides, directs, and governs it by His Holy Spirit, that though errors and heresies may sometimes disease and trouble some parts of it, yet they can never infect the whole; but that is still kept sound and entire, notwithstanding all the power and malice of men or devils against it. So that,

if we consider the Universal Church, or congregation of faithful people, as in all ages dispersed over the whole world, we may easily conclude that the greatest part, from which the whole must be denominated, was always in the right; which the ancient Fathers were so fully persuaded of, that although the word καθολικὸς properly signifies universal, yet they commonly used it in the same sense as we do the word orthodox, as opposed to an heretic; calling an orthodox man a Catholic, that is, a son of the Catholic Church: as taking it for granted that they, and only they, which constantly adhere to the doctrine of the Catholic or Universal Church, are truly orthodox; which they could not do, unless they had believed the Catholic Church to be so. And besides that, it is part of our very creed that the Catholic Church is holy, which she could not be, except free from heresy, as directly opposite to true holiness.

He therefore that would be sure not to fall into damnable errors, must be sure also to continue firm and steadfast to the doctrine of the Universal Church, as being grounded upon the Scriptures rightly understood: for so every thing is that she hath taught us. For the Catholic Church never undertook, as the Romish hath done, to coin any new doctrines of her own head: no, she always took the Scriptures for the only standard of truth, and hath accordingly delivered her sense of them, in such words as she judged to agree exactly with those which are there used.

And therefore it is observable, that the Church never undertook publicly to determine any truth, until it was first denied; nor to interpret the Scriptures, until they were first perverted. If no heretics had ever risen up in the Church, the Church had never held any general councils; and if the the Scripture words and phrases had not been first abused, and wrested to a wrong and contrary sense to what they were intended, she had never invented other words to explain them. But when the enemy had sown tares in the Lord's field, the Church could not but endeavour to root them out, or at least to keep them from spreading any further: when wicked men had offered violence to the Word of God, His spouse could do no less than defend it,

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and declare the true sense and meaning of it to her children.

As for example, that great fundamental article of our Christian faith, upon which not only our religion, but our eternal salvation, depends, the divinity of our Blessed Saviour, is so plainly, so fully, so frequently asserted in Holy Writ, that the Church did for many years together believe, acknowledge, and preach it, only in Scripture-words, and needed not as yet any other words whereby to express it. But when it was once denied, and the Scripture-words so far abused, as that a quite contrary sense was extorted from them, then it was time for the Catholic Church to appear in its behalf: and being accordingly assembled in a general Council at Nice, she there determined that the Son is ὁμοούσιος τῷ Πατρί, of the same substance or essence with the Father. Which words she then used only for the clearer explication of the several places in Scripture, where the divinity of Christ is asserted. For Athanasius, who was present at the Council, saith, that the Fathers gathering the sense of the Scriptures concerning our Saviour, εἰρήκασι τὸ ὁμοούσιον, pronounced him to be ὁμοούσιος. And therefore, though the word was not in Scripture, they intended no more by it than what was there expressed in other words.

[Athanas. de Synodis Arimini et Seleuciæ Epist. Tom. i. p. 920. B. Ed. Colon. 1686.]

I know that the Arians complained that the word οὐσία was nowhere to be found in Holy Writ. But though that Greek word be not, yet certainly there is no word in all the Greek language that more exactly answers to the most proper name of God יְהוָה than οὐσία doth; and indeed the word Κύριος, which the Apostles use, and whereby the Septuagint translate יְהוָה, is much of the same signification in its original, from the old word Κύρω; the same with εἰμι and ὑπάρχω. And besides that, the Council of Nice did not invent this word, but it had been used in the Church all along before: for Athanasius saith, that some Bishops, both of Rome and Alexandria,[1] had used it 150 years before that time; and that Eusebius Cæsariensis himself acknowledged

[1] [Εὐσέβιος καίτοι πρὸ μιᾶς ἀρνούμενος, ὅμως ὕστερον ὑπογράψας. Athanas. Narratio de Concil. Nicæno. Tom. i. p. 251. Ed. Colon. 1686. Cf. Epist. in Africanos Episcopos. Tom. i. p. 937. B.]

as much, and upon that account afterwards subscribed to the Council. Who those ancient Bishops were we know not, their works being now lost: but Tertullian, who lived about 105 years before that time, in his Apology, saith, that the Son is called God, *ex unitate substantiæ;* and in his book against Praxeas,[1] that the three persons are one God, *per substantiæ unitatem*, which perfectly agrees with the Greek word ὁμοούσιος: and seeing they that lived so very near to the Apostles used this word, it is more than probable that they also were not the first inventors of it, but that they had received it from the Apostles themselves.

[Tertull. Apologet. c. xxi. p. 19. "Idcirco Filium Dei et Deum dictum, ex Unitate Substantiæ."]

Howsoever, this is certain, that in the writings both of the Apostles and Prophets we frequently meet with the truth itself, which is signified by this word; which having been confirmed by the Council of Nice, it hath been constantly used by the Universal Church, as the true and full interpretation of the Holy Scripture, concerning the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour; and so generally received by all Christians of all ages, that after the Arians were once silenced, it never met with any considerable opponents in the world but Mahomet and Socinus, with their followers, which deserve not the name of Christians.

The same may be observed of the third general Council held at Ephesus: for when Nestorius had affirmed, that in Christ, as there are two natures, so there are two persons likewise; one person, as He was God begotten of the Father; the other, as man born of his mother: and therefore that the Blessed Virgin could not properly be called Θεοτόκος: the Council, for the determination of this question, did not only consult the several texts in Scripture relating to our Blessed Saviour, but considered likewise in what sense those places had been understood by the Catholic Church before that time; for which end they caused the Nicene Creed, and several passages out of St. Cyprian, St. Basil, Athanasius, Gregory Nazianzen, and many others, to be read in Council. And from thence they gathered, and therefore pronounced, that according to the Scriptures, as

[Concil. Ephes. v. Hard. Tom. i. p. 1279. E.; p. 1307. E.; p. 1310. B.]

[Cf. p. 1276. E.; p. 1642. D.]

[Cf. p. 1511. A. B.] [P. 1404. E.; p. 1408. C.] [P. 1401; pp. 1405, 6. E.]

[1] [Tertull. adv. Prax. c. xxv. p. 515. "Ego et Pater unum sumus, ad Substantiæ unitatem, non ad numeri singularitatem." Cf. c. xii. p. 506. "Unam substantiam in tribus cohærentibus."]

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interpreted by the Catholic Church, Christ, though He have two natures, yet He is but one person, and by consequence that the Virgin Mary might properly be called Θεοτόκος, because the same person who was born of her is truly God as well as man: which being once determined by an universal Council to be the true sense and meaning of the Scriptures in this point, hath been acknowledged by the Universal Church ever since, till this time.

[v. Synodi. Epist. ad Clerum populumque Constantinop. ap. Hard. i. pp. 1443-4. C. D.]

I might instance in other general Councils, wherein the same way and method of proceeding was religiously observed. For they never took upon them to form new articles of faith, but only to explain and establish the old ones: which being delivered in Scripture, were believed all along by the Catholic Church before that time. And certainly whatsoever hath been thus approved by General Councils, and received and taught by the Universal Church in all ages, we have all the reason in the world to believe it to be the true doctrine of the Gospel, every way corresponding with what is delivered in the Scriptures, though it be not *totidem verbis* contained in them. Be sure no sober man but must acknowledge it is more possible for himself, yea, and for any particular Church, to err, than it is for the Universal Church to do so: and therefore it must needs be the safest way to use Scripture-words in such a sense as the Universal Church hath always put upon them, and by consequence such words also, whereby the Universal Church hath always expressed her sense of God's mind as revealed to us in Scripture; and to look upon them all as sound words, such as St. Paul here speaks of, such as will convey right and sound notions of the Divine mysteries to our understandings.

I have insisted the longer upon this, both because it is so necessary to our being sound in the faith, and also because of the great use that may be made of it in defending our Church against its adversaries on all sides. For our Church, as to its doctrine as well as discipline, is settled upon so firm a basis, so truly Catholic, that none can oppose what she teacheth, without denying, not only the Scriptures, but the Scriptures as interpreted by the Universal Church. So that we may justly challenge all the world to shew us any one

point or article of faith, wherein our Church differs from the Catholic in all ages, since the Apostles' days: which, I think, is more than can be said of any other national Church in the whole world, there being no other, that I know of, which keeps to the form of sound words delivered in Scripture, as interpreted by the Universal Church, so firmly and constantly as ours doth.

Not to trouble you at present with any other, there is the Church of Rome, that pretends herself to be the only Catholic Church in the world. Examine but the words that she hath taken up of late, the great words whereby she distinguisheth herself from all other Churches, and you will find that they agree neither with Scripture nor antiquity, much less with both, as all sound words do. What those words are which she insists so much upon, is easy to be found out, for we have a form of them prescribed and published by Pope Pius IV., in the Acts of the Council of Trent, and inserted into their Canon Law; a form of words that every one is bound to swear to, before he can be admitted into any degree in their universities, into any benefice, dignity, or preferment in their Church, or indeed into any public employment whatsoever; as appears by the bull of the said Pope to that purpose. But in this whole form of words, except the Nicene Creed, with which it begins, to make the rest go down the better, there is scarce any one word which can properly be called sound, in the sense that I have now explained. There is *transubstantiatio*, *purgatorium*, and several such novel words, which many of the Papists themselves have acknowledged can never be proved from Scripture: and if so, I am sure they are not consonant to the doctrine of the Universal Church; for she never proposed any thing as necessary to be believed but what she could prove from Scripture.

It is not worth our labour to run over the whole form; but give me leave to single out one paragraph, because of its relation to the conspiracy which was yesterday prevented, and we praised God for our deliverance from it. The words are these: *Sanctam Catholicam et Apostolicam Romanam Ecclesiam, omnium Ecclesiarum matrem et magistram, agnosco; Romanoque Pontifici, Sancti Petri Aposto-*

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lorum Principis Successori, ac Jesu Christi Vicario, veram obedientiam spondeo ac juro. An excellent form of words truly, for a man to swear to, directly contrary both to the Scriptures and the Catholic Church! The Church of Rome, as now established, a Catholic and Apostolic Church! The mother and the mistress of all other Churches! But that is nothing in comparison of what follows: the Bishop of Rome, Successor to St. Peter, and the Vicar of Christ!

And if you would know in what sense he is the Vicar of Christ, their authors commonly tell you, that he is so Christ's Vicar upon earth, that Christ and he are but one and the same head of the Church; and so every creature is as much bound to be subject to the Pope, as to Christ Himself. And therefore, Antonius Puccius, in a speech he made in the Lateran Council to Pope Leo X., there present, was neither afraid nor ashamed to use these words to him: *Quasi in te, uno, vero, et legitimo Christi et Dei Vicario, Propheticum illud debuerit rursus impleri, Adorabunt eum omnes Reges Terræ, omnes Gentes servient ei.* So horribly hath this one word or title given to the Pope been abused by them! It hath indeed been the occasion not only of their pride and ambition, but likewise of all the villanies, persecutions and assassinations that have been executed or attempted by them. For the constant use of this word having imprinted in their minds a fancy, that the Bishop of Rome sits there in Christ's stead, to manage and order the affairs of the whole world, whatsoever he commands, be it ever so wicked and impious, ever so cruel and barbarous, they look upon it as sacred, and reckon themselves obliged to obey it, as much, yea much more than what Christ Himself hath commanded.

But if, after all, you ask them what right he hath to this name, how he comes to be Christ's Vicar upon earth, more than any other Bishop? their answer is, Because he is St. Peter's successor. And therefore to make out this title, it is necessary for them to prove two things: First, That St. Peter himself was made Christ's Vicar more than any other Apostle; and then, That the Bishop of Rome succeeds him in that office.

As for the first, they quote those words of our Lord to

Peter, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church." But it is plain that the Catholic Church never understood those words in any such sense, as if Peter was by them constituted the Vicar of Christ. And besides, it is plain also, that although we should understand the words of St. Peter's person, yet there is nothing at all conferred upon him by them. For our Lord speaks not in the present, but only in the future tense; and so doth not grant him any thing as yet, but only promiseth to give him something hereafter: "Upon this rock," saith He, "I will build my Church, and I will give thee the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven." And therefore to understand these words aright, we must consider when and how this promise was fulfilled: and that we shall find to have been after the resurrection of Christ, when He said to His Apostles, "As My Father sent Me, so send I you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted to them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Now was that promise fulfilled, now were the keys of Heaven given to St. Peter; but not to him only, but to the rest of the Apostles with him; so that if St. Peter was then made the Vicar of Christ, so were all the other Apostles as well as he; and by consequence all other Bishops as well as he of Rome.

Matt. 16. 18.

John 20. 21, 22, 23.

But after all this, suppose St. Peter was the chief of all the Apostles; suppose our Saviour did design him some peculiar honour, by saying, "Upon this rock I will build My Church:" What is all this to the Pope of Rome? How comes he to be so much concerned in any thing that was said or done to St. Peter? It is nowhere recorded in the Gospel, that our Saviour ever so much as mentioned the city of Rome, much less the Bishop of that city; which certainly it was very necessary He should have done, had He designed him for His perpetual Vicar to the end of the world. He that pretends to so high an honour and dignity as this is, had need have something more to shew for it, than the Bishop of Rome hath; who hath so little, that it was a thousand years after Christ, before this title was given to him. For as I remember, St. Bernard was the first that ever

[Bernard, Epist. ad Eugenium, CCLI. tom. i. p. 249. Ed. Paris, fol. 1690.]

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called him κατ' ἐξοχήν, the Vicar of Christ; and therefore it is far from being the sense of the Catholic Church.

But since this word hath been used, and this title hath been given to the Bishop of Rome, what mischief hath it done in the world? For he, conceiting himself to represent Christ's person upon earth, and to be invested with all His power and authority, at length began to look upon himself as something more than a man; at least, far above all mortals upon earth: and therefore hath taken upon him to depose kings, to absolve their subjects from their allegiance, and to persecute, murder, assassinate all sorts of persons that he is pleased to call heretics; and all this under the pretence of religion, and authority derived from Christ Himself, as being His Vicar upon earth.

Oh Blessed Jesu! that ever Thy sacred name should be thus abused by the sons of men! That ever any one should dare to pretend power from Thee, to destroy those whom Thou camest to save with Thine own blood! What shall we say unto Thee, O Thou Redeemer of Men? We blush and are ashamed of ourselves, that ever any of our nature, which Thou wast pleased to assume, should be so injurious to Thee. How long, O Lord, Holy and True, dost Thou not judge and avenge Thyself on all those who thus continually blaspheme Thy great and all-glorious name, and use it to palliate their most atrocious crimes and barbarous enormities? "Abate their pride, assuage their malice, and confound their devices," that Thy name may be no longer dishonoured, Thy Gospel perverted, nor Thy Holy Catholic Church oppressed by them!

I have taken the boldness to make this short address to our Lord and Master Christ, as being confident that He, according to His promise, is "present with us," and will in His good time grant what we have desired of Him. In the meanwhile, we must learn obedience and submission to His Divine will; and above all things, take care to keep within the bounds that He hath set us, and to continue sound members of that mystical body whereof He is head. For which end, we must be sure to observe this Apostolical rule to "hold fast the form of sound words:" which His Apostle, judged so necessary, that he minds Timothy of it, not only

here, but likewise in his former epistle to him, saying, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust;" that is, the *Fides Depositum*, as St. Hierome expounds it, "that sound faith which is committed to thee:" and then he adds, "avoiding τὰς βεβήλους κενοφωνίας, profane and vain babblings," as contrary to the "sound words" before spoken of: or, as the Latin Fathers generally render it, *devitans prophanas vocum novitates;* reading, I suppose, καινοφωνίας instead of κενοφωνίας; but the sense is much the same. For all new ways of speaking in divinity, especially in our age, is at the best but vain babbling, and commonly profane, possessing men's minds with such notions and conceptions of things, as will infallibly lead them into error and heresy. Read but the wild extravagant opinions of the first heretics and schismatics that disturbed the Church; and afterwards take a view of those which after-ages have produced, together with such as have been either revived or invented in our days; and you will find them all made up of new words, strange phrases, and odd expressions, which please the ears, and then debauch the minds, of them which hearken to them. We need not go far for instances; every sect amongst us will supply us with too many, insomuch that they may be all known from one another merely by their words, and new modes of speaking; whereby they would seem to interpret, when indeed they pervert the Scriptures, and "wrest them to their own destruction."

1 Tim. 6. 20.

[Hieron. in loc. tom. v. p. 1095. Ed. Ben.]

Hence, therefore, it will be our interest and wisdom, as it is our duty, to avoid those "new words" and phrases which have been lately started in the Church, as well as the opinions which are couched under them; and to look upon them at the best, but superfluous and unnecessary, upon that very account, because they are new. For nothing certainly can be necessary to be believed or spoken in our days, which hath not been so all along.

Especially it concerns us, who are to instruct others in the way to bliss, to use none but "sound words," such as are consonant to the Scriptures, as interpreted by the Catholic Church in all ages. I speak not this of myself; it is the express command of our Church, in the Canons she put forth in the year 1571, where she hath these words: *Imprimis verò*

[Lib. quorundam Canonum Discipl. Eccles. Anglic. A.D. 1571. Londin. apud Johannem Day.]

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videbunt (*Concionatores*) *ne quid unquam doceant pro Concione, quod à Populo religiosè teneri et credi velint, nisi quod consentaneum sit Doctrinæ Veteris aut Novi Testamenti, quodque ex illâ ipsâ Doctrinâ Catholici Patres et Veteres Episcopi collegerint.* So wisely hath our Church provided against novelties; insomuch that had this one rule been duly observed as it ought, there would have been no such thing as heresy or schism amongst us; but we should all have continued firm both to the doctrine and discipline of the Universal Church, and so should have "held fast the form of sound words," according to the Apostle's counsel in my text, in the sense I have now explained it; which therefore that we may for the future do, I shall conclude my present discourse with this brief exhortation.

Men, Brethren, and Fathers,

Give me leave to speak freely to you, of the Church you live in: a Church, not only in its doctrine and discipline, but in all things else exactly conformable to the Primitive, the Apostolical, the Catholic Church. For, was that no sooner planted by Christ, but it was watered by the blood of Martyrs? So was ours. Did the primitive Christians suffer martyrdom from Rome? So did our first Reformers. Hath the Catholic Church been all along pestered with heretics and schismatics? So hath ours. Have they endeavoured in all ages to undermine, and so to overthrow her? In this also, ours is but too much like unto her. And it is no wonder, for the same reason that occasioned all the disturbances and oppositions that the Catholic Church ever met with, still holds good as to ours too; even because its doctrine is so pure, its discipline so severe, its worship so solemn, and all its rules and constitutions so holy, perfect, and divine, that mankind, being generally debauched in their principles and practices, have a natural averseness from it, if not an antipathy against it. They would willingly go to Heaven, but are loth to be at so much pains for it, as our Church, out of the Word of God, prescribes; and therefore would fain persuade themselves, that many of her prescriptions are either sinful or superfluous, because not suiting, forsooth, with their humour, interest, or depraved

inclinations. But all their little objections against her are grounded either upon their ignorance of what she prescribes, or else upon their unwillingness to perform it. There are very few, either of the Papists or Sectaries, that know what our Church is, and therefore all their zeal against it must needs be "without knowledge." And they that have some general notions of it, would never set themselves in good earnest upon the observance of what she commands, and therefore cannot know what advantage it would be to them. [Rom. 10. 2.]

Whereas, let any one that hath a due sense of religion, and a real desire of happiness, let such a one make trial of our Church but for one year; let him constantly read the Scriptures, in the method that she prescribes; let him constantly use the Common-Prayer, according to her directions; let him constantly observe all her fasts and holy-days; let him receive the Sacrament as often as she is ready to administer it, and perform whatsoever else she hath been pleased to command; let any man, I say, do this, and then let him be against our Church, if he can: I am confident he cannot. But our misery is, that none of those who are out of our Church, and but few of those that are in it, will make the experiment: and that is the reason that those are so violent against her, and these so indifferent for her.

But let others do what they please, and answer for themselves as well as they can another day; as for you who are here at this time, in the especial presence of God, I humbly beseech and exhort you in the "name of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ," that as He hath been pleased to admit you into so holy and pure a Church, so you would all endeavour to live up to the rules and orders of it, as many here present do. First, keep close to the words she uses in her Articles and Common Prayers: by this means you will have a right judgment in all things, and "hold fast the form of sound words" indeed. By this means you will be secure from heresy, and entertain no doctrine but what is Catholic and orthodox. By this means whatsoever happens, you will still be steadfast in the faith of Christ, and not suffer yourselves to be imposed upon by the adversaries of our Church on either side; for if they cannot fasten "new

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words" upon you, it will be impossible for them ever to deceive you.

But then you must remember to conform to the discipline as well as to the doctrine of our Church, not hypocritically, indifferently, and partially, but sincerely, constantly, universally, so as to observe and do whatsoever she commands, either in her Liturgy, Canons, or Constitutions. By this means you will live as the Primitive Fathers did, and come short of none of the most eminent Christians that ever lived since the Apostles' times. By this you will shame the adversaries of our Church into a compliance with her, when they see how far you outstrip them in all true grace and virtue: yea, by this means you will be really saints on earth and glorified saints in Heaven. For be but you as pious towards God, as loyal to our Queen, as sober in yourselves, as faithful to your friends, as loving to your enemies, as charitable to the poor, as just to all, as our Church enjoins you; in a word, be but you as conformable to her, as she is to the Catholic Church in all things, and my life, my eternal life for yours, you cannot but be happy for evermore. Which God of His infinite mercy grant we may all be, in and through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom, &c.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, &c.

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CHRIST'S CHURCH ESTABLISHED ON A ROCK.

Matt. xvi. 18.

And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church.

Although the Son of God hath, with His own most precious blood, purchased pardon and salvation for us, yet we have no ground or reason to expect that we shall ever be actually possessed of it, unless we use those means which He Himself hath prescribed and appointed in order thereunto; which being duly and effectually administered only in the Church, which He for that purpose hath "established" upon earth, He therefore "addeth to the Church daily such as shall be saved." [Acts 2. 47.] And that mankind may never want an opportunity of obtaining eternal salvation by Him, He always did, and ever will take care that His said Church, wherein they may obtain it, be upheld and preserved in the world, notwithstanding all the opposition that men or devils can make against it: which being a matter of so great importance and comfort to us all, our Saviour did not think it enough to acquaint His Apostles with it when He was upon earth, but He hath left it upon record, that we and all generations may always have it from His own mouth, and so be fully assured of it, in these words; "And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

In speaking to which words, I might first take notice how horribly they have been abused, and wrested so far, that they have been brought in as an evidence for that

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absolute and unlimited power, or rather tyranny, which the Bishop of Rome pretends to, not only over all his brethren, the Bishops and Pastors of the Church, but likewise over all the Sovereign Princes and Emperors of the world. But if he hath no better title to the Bishopric of Rome, than he hath to such an universal bishopric and monarchy over all the world from these words, the See is certainly void, and the conclave may choose another into it when they please. For what if our Lord said to Simon, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church?" What is all this to the Pope of Rome? How comes he to be so much concerned in these words, wherein there is not the least mention nor intimation either of Rome itself, or the Pope there, much less of any such universal authority granted to him? Certainly he that lays claim to such an extraordinary power, as derived to him from Christ, (far greater than Christ Himself would ever exercise upon earth,) had need to have more to shew for it than these, or any other words in the Holy Gospel will afford him.

But this being a cause wherein the Bishop of Rome hath been so often cast and baffled already, and we having so little reason to fear that it will ever be tried over again, either in this or any other reformed Church, now that princes are grown wiser than to give away their crowns, and subject themselves to a foreign power upon such groundless pretences; I shall say no more at present to it, but only mind you in general of the proper meaning of the words.

Our Lord having asked His Apostles, "whom men thought Him to be," He then propounded the same question to them, saying, "But whom say ye that I am?" To which Peter in the name of the rest answers, "Thou art Christ, the Son of the living God." Upon which our Lord having pronounced him blessed, for being enabled to give so true and sound an answer to so great a question, he adds, "And I also say unto thee, thou art Peter" (a rock, as the word signifies,) "and upon this rock I will build My Church:" that is, thou shalt be one of those upon whom I will build My Church, like an house upon a rock, that shall never be moved.

He that looks upon these words with a single eye, may

easily discern this to be the natural sense and meaning of them; especially if he reads them by that light which St. Paul hath given them, where he tells the Ephesians, that they, and so the whole Church, were "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone." For it is plain from hence, that the Church was "built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets;" but it is plain also, that Peter was one of the Apostles, and therefore that it was built upon him as well as upon the other Apostles. But then it was built upon the other also as well as upon him: for St. Paul, who perfectly understood our Lord's meaning, asserts it of the Apostles in general, not only of St. Peter in particular. And although our Saviour in my text directs His discourse to St. Peter in particular, because he had spoke to Him in the name of all the rest, yet He doth not thereby exclude the other Apostles, but rather includes them all in him. So that as he had spoken the sense of all the rest to Christ, so all the rest were equally concerned in what Christ then spoke to him: as appears also, from what our Lord saith further to him in the words following my text; "And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in Heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven." Where we may observe, that our Lord speaks, as in my text, not in the present, but future tense; and so doth not give St. Peter the keys now, but promiseth to give them hereafter to him: "I will," saith He, "give thee the keys of the kingdom of Heaven." But that this promise, though spoken only to St. Peter, yet was meant for all the other Apostles as well as for him, is plain and undeniable; it was fulfilled to all the rest as well as to him: for it was not fulfilled till after Christ's resurrection, when He breathed on His Apostles, and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained." Now were the keys, according to the aforesaid promise, given to St. Peter; but not to him only, but to the rest of the Apostles with him. Whereby our Lord Himself hath fully demonstrated, that the promise

Eph. 2. 20.

John 20. 22, 23.

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which He here made to St. Peter, was intended by Him for all His Apostles as well as for him; and by consequence that this part of it likewise was so, where He saith, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church."

And then it follows, "And the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it." Which words containing matter very proper for the occasion, by His assistance who spake them, I shall endeavour to speak, though very briefly, to them: and for that purpose shall first observe in general, that our Saviour here supposeth that the gates of Hell will do what they can to destroy His Church; but He assures us withal, that "they shall not prevail against it."

First therefore, in that our Saviour saith, "that the gates of Hell shall not prevail against His Church," He plainly intimates and supposeth that they will do what they can to ruin and destroy it: where by the gates of Hell, He means the Devils there, sitting as it were in council, as the ancients were wont to do in the gates of their city, and there consulting together, how to undermine and overthrow the Church that Christ hath established upon earth.

And verily, seeing that Christ came into the world on purpose to destroy the works of the Devil, and that it is in and by His Church that He always doth it, it is no wonder that the Devil endeavours all he can to destroy that: for if that could be once effected, he would meet with no opposition in the world, but would tyrannise over all mankind as he formerly did, and still doth where the Church is not yet settled. Whereas in such places where Christ's Church is established, and so His Word and Sacraments are rightly administered, there the Devil's power is opposed, his service neglected, his oracles silenced, his stratagems countermined, and his whole kingdom mightily depopulated and laid waste.

For when men are first admitted into the Church, they renounce the Devil and all his works, and list themselves under Christ's banner: and then whatsoever attempts the Devil may afterwards make upon them to recover them again into his possession, the Church by Christ's order keeps them under such discipline, and supplies them continually with such spiritual armour of God's word, whereby they are

enabled not only to withstand, but overcome them all. For she keeps their bodies under by fasting and watching, and their souls above the world by praying and praising God. She keeps their minds always filled with an holy awe and dread of God, by solemn reading and expounding His Word to them; and their faith in the Gospel strong and vigorous, by frequent receiving of the Holy Eucharist, whereby they "are able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one." [Eph.6.16.] And they who carefully observe these and the like means of grace which are there administered, are always actuated, influenced, and assisted by Christ's Holy Spirit; which according to His promise runs through His Church, and resists the Devil so as to make him fly from them: insomuch [James 4. 7.] that the grand adversary of mankind can never attain his malicious ends upon any that hold constant communion with the Church, and live up to the rules and orders of it, as they ought to do.

This he knows well enough, and therefore hath always had an implacable enmity and hatred against the Church ever since it was first erected; and hath used all the cunning and policy that he hath, and all the force and power that he ever could, some way or other to subvert it. It no sooner appeared in the world, but he raised up oracles to plead, and philosophers to dispute against it, judges to condemn, and emperors to persecute it with the most exquisite torments, that he with all his art could put into their heads; and this he did for some ages together: but when he saw that this would not do his work, but that the Church, notwithstanding, did not only keep its ground, but daily obtained more and more, so that emperors themselves began to favour and abet it, then like an old politician as he is, he betakes himself to another course, and endeavours to divide it against itself, by raising an intestine war in its own bowels. For which purpose he seduced many of those who outwardly professed to hold communion with the Church into such damnable errors and heresies, and hurried them on with so much fury and violence in the defending and propagating of the same, that the whole Church was in danger of being torn into pieces by them.

But maugre all his attempts to the contrary, the orthodox

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faith still prevailed, and the Church was settled upon the lasting foundations of peace and truth: which the Devil, to his great grief observing, he then saw there was no other way but to turn himself into an angel of light, and under that disguise to insinuate himself into the Church, and possess as many of the members of it as he could, either with superstitious or schismatical opinions, and with blind ungovernable zeal for them, more than for all the great truths and duties of the Gospel besides; whereby he hath certainly done more mischief to the Church than by all his other devices put together. For by this means he takes off men's minds from the substance of religion, and employs them continually about the little circumstances of it, and so draws them on by degrees to a dislike of the Church, where true substantial religion is taught and practised, until at length they do not only separate from it, but join with him in opposing it with all their might. So that the Devil by this means hath always his agents upon earth, not only amongst the professed enemies to all religion, but amongst the professors of the Christian itself, always ready to carry on and execute the designs which he, with his great council in the gates of Hell, projects and contrives against the Church, whereby to disturb its peace, and, if it was possible, overturn the very foundations of it.

But blessed be God, we have Christ's own word for it, that "the gates of Hell shall never prevail" against His Church; and therefore we need not fear but He will take care of it. He may suffer it to be under fiery trials for some time, the better to purify and cleanse it. He may suffer some corrupt members to be cut off, that the whole may not be infected with them. He may suffer heresies and schisms to be in it, that "they who are approved of may be made manifest," as His Apostle tells us. He may suffer "false Christs" and "false Prophets" to arise in it, and to "shew great signs and wonders;" insomuch that "if it were possible they should deceive the very elect," as He Himself hath foretold: but after all, He cannot suffer it to be totally destroyed; for He hath said, He will not, and we may well take His Word, who cannot lie, for it; especially having had above sixteen hundred years' experience of it already.

[1Cor. 11. 19.]

[Matt. 24. 24.]

In all which time the gates of Hell have been plotting and conspiring against the Church, and have used all the ways and methods that wit or malice could suggest, to compass the destruction of it; and yet they have not done it, but still the Church subsists and flourisheth as much as ever.

And it is well for us and all mankind it doth so; for if Christ's Church should be once destroyed, all hopes of salvation by Him would perish together with it; and then the Devil would have his ends. For, from that time forward, mankind would be in the same condition with him; inevitably lost for ever. For all the means of grace would be taken away, and by consequence, of salvation too. The light of the Gospel would be extinguished, and the whole earth overspread with darkness and ignorance, the oracles of Heaven would expire, and those of Hell be revived again; the motives of God's Holy Spirit would cease, and all mankind would be hurried about with the impetuous suggestions and temptations of wicked and impure spirits. In short, Christ's kingdom would be thrown down, and the Devil's set up in its place; so that all the world would be brought into an entire subjection to him, and be "carried captive by him at his will, into that everlasting fire which is prepared for him and for his angels." [2 Tim. 2. 26. Matt. 25. 41.]

But what do I mean, to suppose that which cannot be, and therefore ought not to be supposed? No, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but Christ's Word shall never pass away." He hath said, that the gates of Hell shall never prevail against His Church; and therefore it is impossible they ever should. And the reason is, because that He, "like the wise man," that He Himself speaks of, "hath built it upon a rock;" and therefore although "the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon it, it cannot fall, for it is founded upon a rock," even upon Himself, the "Rock of ages," in the first place; and then upon "the foundation of His Apostles and Prophets, He Himself" likewise being "the chief corner-stone." So that the Devil may as well undertake to destroy Christ's real body in Heaven, as His mystical upon earth: for so long as He continues there, be sure His Church shall continue here, and never cease to be, till time itself shall do so: Luke 21. 33. Matt. 7. 24, 25. [Eph. 2. 20.]

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and then also it shall not be destroyed by Hell, but translated into Heaven, there to triumph for evermore; that all the world may know how true our Lord is, and how faithfully He hath performed what He here spake to St. Peter, saying, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it."

The words being thus explained, it is easy to apply them to our present occasion and juncture of affairs. For as Christ said in another case, I may now in a great measure say to you, "This day was the Scripture fulfilled in your ears:" for this day "the gates of Hell" conspired the ruin of Christ's Church amongst us, but could "not prevail against it." The circumstances of which conspiracy are so many, that it would be tedious, and so well known, that it would be superfluous to repeat them here; and withal so sad and tragical, that the very relating of them would be too great an alloy to the joy and triumphs of the day. Wherefore I shall not trouble you with them, but only observe in general, that the Church of Christ established in this nation, having for a long time together held communion with that of Rome, had thereby contracted many errors both in opinion and practice, which when she came to herself and had her eyes opened, she was so sensible of, that she saw it necessary for her to lay aside all correspondence with so corrupt a Church as that was, and to reform herself according to the pattern of Christ's Catholic and Apostolic Church: which she accordingly did, by the blessing of God, with so great prudence and piety, that she became both in doctrine, discipline, and worship, one of the best and purest Churches that ever were upon the face of the earth; every way exactly fitted to the great ends for which Christ instituted His Church in general; even for the advancing God's glory, and for the bringing of souls to Heaven.

[Luke 4. 21.]

This the Devil perceived all along, and therefore endeavoured what he could to prevent it; and for that purpose put so many rubs in the way, that it could not be effected without much time and difficulty: but when, notwithstanding his endeavours, it was at length accomplished, so that the Church of Christ was planted amongst us in its highest

purity and perfection, he then resolved to try his skill, and exert the utmost of his power to destroy it root and branch. In order whereunto, having before this spread abroad an opinion in the Church of Rome, that it was both lawful and meritorious to assassinate, murder, and destroy all princes and people that would not submit to her, he now possessed some of that Communion with so strong a belief of it, howsoever contrary to the principles of the Christian religion, that they looked upon it as their duty as well as interest to put it into practice; which therefore was accordingly attempted in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, but still in vain.

But when, upon her decease, King James, of famous and ever-blessed memory, succeeded as rightful heir to the crown, and had publicly declared himself against all Popish errors and superstitions, then, being acted with the aforesaid diabolical principle, they resolved to cut both him and his people off together at one blow, and that in the most barbarous and savage manner that ever was heard of, and such as cannot be thought of by Christians, no, not by heathens themselves, without horror and amazement: for having, in order thereunto, laid in a great quantity of gunpowder under the Lords' House, they designed therewith to have blown up both the King and the three states of this realm, then assembled in parliament, all together; that so having, Ahab-like, first killed, and then taken possession of the Church and Crown of England, they might reduce them both into a slavish subjection to the court of Rome. [1 Kings 21. 19.]

But this is too doleful a subject to insist on long; neither should I have mentioned it at all, but that both the day and my text require it. Forasmuch as from hence we may see what the gates of Hell have attempted against our Church, and also what our blessed Saviour hath done for it; who took care that this horrid conspiracy should not only be timely discovered, but that too in a wonderful manner, as King James himself observed: so that the discovery appeared as plainly to be from Heaven, as the invention of it was from Hell. Insomuch that we have all the reason in the world to acknowledge, as we do in the service appointed for the day, "That it was Almighty God, who of His gracious goodness and tender mercy towards us, prevented the

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malice and imagination of our enemies, by discovering and confounding their horrid and wicked enterprise, plotted and intended this day to be executed against the King and the whole state of this realm, for the subversion of the government and religion established amongst us:" and that this was one great instance of our Lord's fulfilling His promise, that "the gates of Hell should not prevail against His Church."

Neither is this the only instance we have had of it; for there have been several others since, and one especially but very lately. For the Devil, finding by experience how likely the hellish principle before-mentioned was to take effect, resolved to try it again another way: for which end, knowing full wéll that when a branch is lopt off from the tree, it partakes no longer of the sap, and then is good for nothing but to make tools of; hence, under one pretence or other, he separated as many as he could from the Church, that so he might have them at his own beck, and fit them for the work he designed to do by them. Which done, he puffed them up with an high conceit that they and their sect, be it what it will, was not only godly, but the only godly party in the land; and therefore that they not only might, but ought to do any thing to promote and propagate the same. But they being of many and different sects, (and he cares not which they are of, so they be not of the Church) he saw it necessary to possess them all in common with a panic fear, that Popery would prevail again; and with a strong belief, that they ought to do as much to keep it out, as the others had done to bring it in. Upon which they accordingly conspired (I dread to speak it) to assassinate the King that then was, his royal brother, our most gracious sovereign, and all loyal subjects of all orders and degrees: which, as it was the greatest wickedness that the gates of Hell could ever invent, so it was certainly the most effectual course they could ever take for the ruin of Christ's Church amongst us. But here again we may see Christ's faithfulness to His promise, who, rather than the conspiracy should prevail against His Church, set it against itself, not suffering some that were engaged in it to be at rest in their own minds, until they had discovered, and so prevented it for that time.

And when it afterwards broke out into open rebellion, as ye know it did this last summer, then He was pleased openly to appear in behalf of the King and Church; and by a little handful of men, in comparison, to defeat and disperse the rebels, so as that we have just ground to hope they will never be able to disturb the peace either of the Church or kingdom any more.

This I thought good to mention now, because this fanatical was so exactly like to the Popish conspiracy we this day commemorate, that we cannot truly express our thankfulness to God for His preventing the execution of the one, and not of the other too; insomuch, that unless another be appointed by authority, I see no reason why this may not for the future serve for an anniversary-day of thanksgiving for our deliverance from both; especially, seeing that the service for the day is for the most part so composed, as it were, by the Spirit of Prophecy, that it may be equally applied to the one as well as to the other. I am sure we shall always have infinite cause to adore the goodness, and to magnify the power and mercy of the Most High God, for such wonderful deliverances of the King and Church, as both these were; and to look upon them as standing monuments of His truth and veracity, who said, that the gates of Hell should not prevail against His Church.

But that we may be troubled no more with such unnatural and hellish conspiracies, not so much as to be named amongst Christians, I heartily wish that all such would keep these words of Christ continually in their minds; for then, if they have any sense at all of His religion, they would be so far from hearkening to any temptations against His Church, that they would do what possibly they could for it. For here our Saviour plainly intimates, as I observed before, that all attempts against the Church have their rise in Hell; there the original plot is laid, and what men do in it upon earth, is only to put the Devil's designs into execution: so that all that engage in such conspiracies, do in effect give up themselves to the Devil, to be employed by him in those horrid projects that he is always carrying on against the Church. Whatsoever they profess, it is his work they do; and he will one day pay them their wages

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for it: they are but his instruments, and when he hath done what mischief he can with them, he will throw them into the fire, there to bewail their folly and madness for ever.

Folly and madness indeed! for men to list themselves under Christ's banner, and yet fight for the Devil against him; and to devote themselves to his drudgery, who hath no other rewards to give them but eternal flames; and who, whatsoever he may pretend, cannot promise them so much as the pleasure and satisfaction of ever accomplishing his designs: for all this while they do but kick against the pricks, and labour to destroy that which Truth and Omnipotence itself preserves.

If these things were duly weighed and believed as they ought, we should hear no more of any such conspiracies carried on against Christ's Church, by those who profess His Gospel; but instead of that, we should all make it as much our business as it is our duty, to promote its interest in the world, and especially in this nation, where Almighty God hath appeared so miraculously for it, and Christ hath so faithfully performed the promise that He hath made to it.

For from hence it is evident, that the interest of the Church is the interest of Christ Himself; and therefore, that whatsoever is done for that, He reckons it as done for Himself: for indeed He is the supreme manager of all its concerns, and all others that do any thing for it, not only under Him, but by His assistance too, as well as order. And certainly as He is the best master that we can ever serve, so His service is the most honourable employment that mortals are capable of; insomuch, that all who have been so happy as to be any way serviceable to Him in the preserving of His Church, have as much cause to thank God for the honour that He hath conferred upon them, as for the success that He hath given them in it: especially considering, that this is the highest service that we can ever perform to our great Lord and Master Christ, as conducing so much to the salvation of so many thousand souls, which He hath purchased with His own blood; that they may praise and glorify His name for ever, as for His other mercies, so in a particular manner for the many great and

good men that He hath raised up to defend that Church, in which they attained salvation.

But so long as there are Devils in Hell, the Church will be sure to have enemies upon earth, striving all they can either to ruin or deprave it; and therefore it will be always necessary to be upon your guard, and not only to defend it against all assaults, but to prevent them too, as much as may be, that neither superstition, heresy nor schism may ever any more break in upon it. For which purpose we may observe, that when the Church was fallen so low, as in the great and long Rebellion, that no ordinary means could raise it up, then God Himself was pleased to do it by His extraordinary power, in the miraculous restoration of it, together with our gracious sovereign. But now, that He hath not only set it up again, but hath supported, strengthened and established it by civil sanctions, he now expects that these lawful means, which He by His Providence hath ordained for the preservation of it, be duly administered: I say lawful; for as for unlawful means, there can be no such thing in Nature: for nothing that is unlawful can ever be the means of any good, much less of so great a good as that is. And, therefore, it is plainly the Devil's device to put men upon attempting such things for the Church, which he knows can never do it good, but hopes may prove its ruin. Be sure it is Christ alone that doth or can defend His Church; and therefore they that would be subservient to Him in so good a work, must take such measures, and use such means as He prescribes or allows of in His Holy Gospel. And if that be done, we need trouble our heads no more about it, but leave it to His protection, who hath all power both in Heaven and earth committed to Him, and who hath given us His own infallible word for it, that the gates of Hell shall never prevail against His Church.

And verily, as ye have all the reason in the world to continue your endeavours for the peace and settlement of the Church, considering how much it conduces to the glory of God, to the ease and safety of our gracious sovereign, to the peace and welfare of the whole kingdom, and to the salvation of your own and all the souls that are in it; so likewise

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ye have all the encouragement imaginable to do it, seeing you serve a master who can crown your endeavours with success, as well as your heads with glory for it: and that He will do what He can, you may now be confident from your own experience, as well as from His promise, as considering how great things He hath done already for it; witness the occasion of our present meeting, together with His deliverance from the tumults and conspiracies, and rebellions lately raised against them; and making them all to work together for the good of both the Crown and Church.

Let us, therefore, mistrust our Saviour's care and kindness for our Church no longer, but express our thankfulness unto Him for what is past, by putting our whole trust and confidence in Him for the future, and by giving up ourselves entirely to His service; that we may so live in His Church Militant here on earth, that we may also live in His Church Triumphant in Heaven, through the same our Saviour and mighty Deliverer, Jesus Christ: to whom, with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all honour, praise and glory now and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON VIII.

CHRISTIANITY AN HOLY PRIESTHOOD.

1 Peter ii. 5.

Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

When the Lord, the Lord God omnipotent, had by the Word of His power commanded all things out of nothing, it is written, "That God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good." Every thing was just as He would have it, exactly fitted to the ends and uses for which He designed it; and therefore it was "very good" in His sight, or He was much pleased with it: and so He hath been ever since with all things in Heaven, except the apostate angels; every thing else moving and acting there continually according to His will and pleasure. Neither is there any thing that He hath made upon earth, but what is "very good" in His eyes, so that He is infinitely pleased with it, except mankind; who being fallen from their first estate, are so far from being very good, that they are very bad in the sight of God, as bad as bad can be: for it is written, "That God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." This is the case of man in general, even of all mankind, from first to last. There never was a mere man from the fall to this day, that was every way such as God made him; and therefore never one, that did any one thing that in itself was perfectly good in the sight of God, and so pleasing or acceptable unto Him. But the whole race of mankind being

Gen. 1. 31.

Gen. 6. 5.

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corrupted in all the faculties of their souls and members of their bodies, and always therefore acting irregularly and contrary to the will of God, He is always displeased with them, and with every thing they think or speak, or do of themselves, or by their own natural powers. So that He might justly have condemned them all to the same everlasting fire, "that is prepared for the Devil and his apostate angels;" and would certainly have done it, but that He knew how to advance the glory of His goodness and truth, in restoring them to a capacity of pleasing Him again, and enabling them accordingly to do so, if they will, and to be willing also to do it.

[Matt. 25. 41.]

This is a mystery that is beyond the reach of human understanding; neither could any man have thought it possible, if God had not revealed it in His Holy Word: but now that we have His word for it, we have surer grounds to believe it, than we have to believe any thing that we ourselves can understand. From whence we may see how much we ought to value the Holy Scriptures, and likewise how far the Christian exceeds all other religions: for though all sorts of people profess some kind of religion, whereby they hope to please the God they worship; yet none have any sure ground to believe they worship the true God, nor to hope that He will be pleased with what they do, but only they who believe the Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, to be given by His inspiration; which seeing none but Christians do, none but they can be ever certain that any thing they do is pleasing unto God: but they may be certain of it, and ought to be so, in that they have the way and manner how to do it most plainly revealed to them by God Himself in many places of His Holy Scriptures, and particularly in that which I have now read.

The Apostle writes this Epistle to the elect, or Saints of God. And having in the first chapter put them in mind how they became such, even by being born again by the Word of God, in this he adviseth them as "new-born babes to desire the sincere milk of the same Word," that as they were born, "so they may grow" by it. "If so be," saith he, "ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." For if they

[1Pet. 2.2.]

Ver. 2.

Ver. 3.

had once tasted of it, as be sure they had, they could not but long for more of the Grace of Christ, here called the Lord, as appears from the following words; "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious; ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." For the Church being wholly built upon Christ, and all our hopes of salvation depending upon Him; for the better strengthening and confirming our faith in Him, He is often spoken of in Holy Writ, under the name and notion of a "rock" or "stone." "Behold," saith God by the Prophet, "I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste," or be confounded. "And the stone," saith David, "which the builders refused, is become the head of the corner." For that this stone is Christ, appears from the many places in the New Testament, where these words are applied to Him, not only by His Apostle, but by Christ Himself. And to this the Apostle alludes in this very place, saying, "Unto whom coming as to a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious:" which is the same in effect with His being "refused of the builders, but chosen of God to be the head of the corner." The corner or foundation-stone upon which the whole fabric resteth. "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

Isa. 28. 16. Rom. 9. 23.

Ps. 118. 22.

Acts 4. 11. 1 Pet. 2. 7. Matt. 21. 42. Mark 12. 10. Luke 20. 17.

1 Cor. 3. 11.

But the Apostle here calls Him a "living stone," to shew that this is only a metaphorical expression, denoting His firmness and stability, together with the great need there is of Him in erecting the house here spoken of: but that He is not such a "stone" as those we see upon earth, that are all without sense and life, but a "living stone;" a stone that hath life in itself, and gives life to all that come unto Him, and are built upon Him. And therefore the Apostle having said, "To whom coming as to a living stone;" he adds, "Ye also as lively," or rather as living "stones, are built up a spiritual house." He is such a living stone Himself, that He makes them also who come unto Him, to be so: who therefore as such are built up a spiritual house; an house of God, a temple, wherein the living God Himself is pleased

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to dwell; according to that of the Apostle to the Saints at Corinth, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and
1Cor. 3. 16. Chap. 6. 19. that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" And to those at
Eph. 2. 19. Ephesus, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and the household of God. And are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Whence we see, that the whole Communion of Saints, the body of Christ, are the spiritual house spoken of in my text; "the house of God, or His habitation," by reason of His Spirit dwelling in them. And therefore they are all of the same household, the "household of
Gal. 6. 10. God," as it is here called; and elsewhere, "the household of faith." Because it is by faith that they are built upon Christ the foundation of this house. Hence it is that they
Jude, ver. 20. are all advised "to build up" one another "in their most holy faith." And the Apostle often speaks of "edifying"
[1 Cor. 14. 12; Eph. 4. 12; Rom. 14.19;1Cor. 14. 26.] the Church, "edifying" the "body of Christ, edifying one another in love," that "all things may be done to edifying," and the like. All which expressions have relation to this spiritual house, denoting the necessity of our being edified or built up in faith or love, so that we may be real parts of it, and grow up into an holy temple in the Lord.

But in every temple of the Lord, it is necessary that there be a priesthood to offer sacrifices suitable to such a temple. And so there is here: for the Apostle having said, that the saints are a "spiritual house" or temple, he adds, that they are also an "Holy Priesthood." As they are the "living stones" of which this temple is composed and consisteth, so they are likewise all of the order of priesthood: "an Holy Priesthood," proper for such an house, where the most Holy God resideth. This was first revealed in the Old
Exod. 19. 6. Testament, where God said, "His people should be unto Him a kingdom of Priests." A kingdom wherein all the subjects are both "kings" and "priests;" or, as St. Peter a
1 Pet. 2. 9. little after my text expresseth it, "a royal priesthood." And how they come to be so, we learn from St. John, saying,

"That Jesus Christ hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father." As he gives His Saints a "kingdom," so He consecrates them all to be "Priests;" not such as were under the law, when the "Priesthood" was confined to one family, and offered up only carnal sacrifices, but they are "an holy Priesthood," ordained "to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." Rev. 1. 6; 5. 10.

For the understanding of which words, it will be necessary to consider, what sacrifices they are which the Saints offer to God; wherefore they are called spiritual sacrifices; and that these spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

First therefore, a sacrifice in general, is properly something that we give or offer to God for our own. For though we have nothing but what He first gives to us, yet when He hath given it to us, we have a civil right to it; it is our own in respect of all other men: but when we give it back again to God, divesting ourselves of our own right to it, and transferring it wholly to Him, then He looks upon it as a sacrifice offered up to Him, and is pleased to accept of it as such. Under the Law, God commanded, that oxen, and sheep, and lambs, and suchlike living creatures, should be offered up in sacrifice to Him; which being killed by a Priest, were consumed either by fire upon the altar, or else by those who waited at it, and so were fed as it were at God's table, of such things as were offered to Him. But these sacrifices being ordained only to foreshew and typify the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," they ceased in course, when "He had offered up Himself a sacrifice for our sins upon the cross." But now under the Gospel, other kind of sacrifices are required of us. We are now commanded to "present our bodies as a living sacrifice." Not to kill them, but to offer them up alive, as a "living sacrifice," by devoting ourselves wholly to the service of God; by "mortifying our members that are upon the earth," and "crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts," by keeping our bodies under, and bringing them into subjection to our souls; by subduing our passions, "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and living soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." [John 1. 29.] [Heb. 9. 26.] Rom. 12. 1. Col. 3. 5. Gal. 5. 24. [1 Cor. 9. 27.] Tit. 2. 12.

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Hence all manner of good, pious, and charitable works, that are done in obedience to God, and for His service and honour, are now called *sacrifices*. As where the Apostle saith, that the things which the Philippians sent him, were
Phil. 4. 18. "an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well
Heb. 13. 16. pleasing to God." And "to do good," saith he, "and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

Indeed under the Law itself, these were reckoned the best sort of sacrifices, and preferred before those that were
1 Sam. 15. 22. ordained in the ceremonial law: "Behold," saith Samuel, "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken, than the
Ps. 51. 17. fat of rams." "The sacrifices of God," saith David, "are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God,
Mic. 6. 6, 7, 8. Thou wilt not despise." "Wherewith," saith the Prophet, "shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the High God? Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression? The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God."

There are many such places in the Old Testament, where this is so plainly revealed, that the Scribe who talked with our Saviour, could not but own, that for a man to love God
Mark 12. 33. "with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices."

But sacrificing, in general, being a public owning of God and His sovereignty over the world, whereby we openly testify our acknowledgment and belief, that He is the Almighty Creator, possessor, and governor of all things, and that we are obliged to Him for all the blessings we enjoy; therefore by the sacrifices which are here said to be offered by the holy Priesthood spoken of in my text, such duties seem to be more especially understood, whereby we now set forth the glory of God, by joining together, in making our public profession of our dependance upon Him, and our manifold obligations to Him.

Particularly our open or public praying to Him, and to Him alone, for all the good things that we want. For hereby we plainly discover that we believe Him to be the Author and Giver of "every good and perfect gift:" that we neither have nor can have any thing but what we receive from Him: and that He is so just and true to His word, that He will give us whatsoever He knows to be good for us, "if we ask it of Him according to His will." And therefore, under the Law itself, their public prayers always went along with their daily sacrifices both morning and evening, and were performed at the same time, even while the lamb was roasting upon the altar: and this was itself also reckoned as a sacrifice offered up to God. "Let my prayer," saith David, "be set forth before Thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."

[James 1. 17.]

[1 John 5. 14.]

Ps. 141. 2.

Especially considering that prayer always was, and ought to be, accompanied with praise and thanksgiving to God, which is so properly a sacrifice, that it is often called by that name. "I will offer," saith David, "to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving." "And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare His works with rejoicing" (or singing). And this, even in those days, was more acceptable unto God, than all their other sacrifices. "I will praise the name of God," saith he, "with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving. This also shall please the Lord better than an ox or bullock that hath horns and hoofs." The Apostle also, to shew that this is properly an Evangelical sacrifice, such as St. Peter speaks of in my text, saith, "By Him therefore," even by Christ, "let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."

Ps. 116. 17.

Ps. 107. 22.

Ps. 69. 30, 31.

Heb. 13. 15.

But the sacrifice that is most proper and peculiar to the Gospel, is the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, instituted by our Lord Himself, to succeed all the bloody sacrifices in the Mosaic law.

For though we cannot say, as some absurdly do, that this is such a sacrifice whereby Christ is again offered up to God both for the living and the dead; yet it may as properly be called a sacrifice as any that was ever offered, except that which was offered by Christ Himself: for *His* indeed was

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the only true expiatory sacrifice that was ever offered. Those under the Law were only types of His; and were called sacrifices only upon that account, because they typified and represented that which He was to offer for the sins of the world. And therefore the Sacrament of Christ's body and blood may as well be called by that name as they were. They were typical, and this is a commemorative sacrifice. They foreshewed the death of Christ to come; this shews forth His death already past. "For as often," saith the Apostle, "as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till He come." This is properly our Christian sacrifice, which neither Jews nor Gentiles can have any share in, as the Apostle observes; "We have an Altar, whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle." An Altar, where we partake of the great sacrifice which the Eternal Son of God offered up for the sins of the whole world, and ours among the rest; that Almighty God may be reconciled to us, and receive us again into His love and favour, and make us happy in the enjoyment of it for ever. Which is so great a blessing, that they who really mind their own good and welfare, can no more forbear to partake of this Sacrament when they may, than they can forbear to eat when they are hungry, and have meat before them.

1 Cor. 11. 26.

Heb. 13. 10.

These are those spiritual sacrifices which the holy Priesthood or whole body of Saints offer up to God. The Apostle calls them spiritual, in opposition to those carnal sacrifices that were offered by the Levitical priesthood; and because they are of a spiritual nature, and performed in a spiritual manner, being offered up in the spirits of the Saints as well as bodies; and by the Spirit of God Himself, dwelling in them, and so consecrating them a spiritual house, an holy Priesthood, and enabling them to offer up these sacrifices in the name of Christ, and through the merits of that sacrifice which He hath offered for them: according to that of the Apostle in the place before quoted, by Him "therefore let us offer up the sacrifice of praise to God continually." It is by Him only that they can be offered up so as to be acceptable unto God: and when they are offered up by Him, they can be acceptable unto God no otherwise than by Him too.

[Heb. 13. 15.]

As we are here taught by the Apostle, saying, That these "spiritual sacrifices" are "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

All that I have hitherto discoursed upon these words, being only in order to clear the way for that which I chiefly designed in the choice of them, even to shew how our spiritual sacrifices come to be acceptable to God by Jesus Christ (to our unspeakable comfort;) I shall now by His assistance search into the bottom of it, and lay it as open as I can. For which purpose we may first observe, that, by the Levitical law, when a man brought "an offering to the Lord," of his flock, or his herd, "the Priest was to burn it all upon the altar;" and then it was said "to be a burnt sacrifice, an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord." What we translate sweet savour, in the Hebrew is ריח ניחוח, 'a smell of rest.' Such a smell, whereby God rested satisfied with the sacrifice from whence it came, instead of the death of the offerer, or such punishment as was due unto him for his sins. But he was first to "put his hand upon the head of his burnt-offering; and then," the text saith, "it shall be accepted for him, to make atonement for him." The death of the sacrifice was accepted of, instead of the death which he must otherwise have suffered for his sin. So that God was thereby atoned or reconciled to him, and well pleased again with him, as much as if he had not sinned: not by any virtue in the beast that was killed and burnt, but by reason of the typical relation it had to the sacrifice of the death of Christ, whereby He offered up Himself in our stead, and so made an atonement or propitiation for our sins.

Levit. 1. 9, 13, &c.

Ver. 4.

Now as the Apostle in my text calls our devotions and good works by the name of sacrifices, so he asserts them to be acceptable to God, as the Legal sacrifices were. St. Paul expresseth the same thing in the very words of the Law, saying, that the good works of the Philippians were "an odour of a sweet smell." And then he explains it, by adding, that they "were a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God." And so all the good works that we sincerely perform in obedience to the will of God, although they are not absolutely perfect in themselves, yet He accepts of them as much

Phil. 4. 18.

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as if they were, and is as well pleased with them, and with him that doth them. He looks upon them as good works, such as He would have us to do, and accordingly rewards us for them, by giving us those great blessings which He hath freely promised to those who obey and serve Him. Thus therefore our spiritual sacrifices are here said to be acceptable to God: but not for any worth or value in themselves, but by Jesus Christ. To undertand this, we must consider,—

I. There is nothing which we do that is acceptable or well pleasing to God in itself; for God is pleased with nothing but what is exactly agreeable to His own will: but nothing that we do, is so in all points. But do what we can, we still fail either in the matter, or in the manner, or in the end, or in some circumstance or other. So that, as the

Eccl. 7. 20.

wise man observes, "There is not a just man that doeth good, and sinneth not," not only that always doth good, and never sins, but that doth not sin in the good he doth, by not doing it as he ought in all respects. But nothing is good that is not all good, without any failure or defect in it. Which seeing nothing we do is, therefore nothing we do

[Habak. 1. 13.]

can be of itself acceptable to Him, "who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity," any iniquity, without abhorrence and indignation.

In the next place we may observe, that as all our spiritual sacrifices are thus unclean in the sight of God, so it is not in the power of any, or all the creatures in the world to cleanse them, so as to make them acceptable to Him, with-

Acts 4. 12.

out Christ: neither is there salvation in any other; "For there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," whereby we can be saved from the wrath of God, which is due to every sin and transgression of His law, one as well as another; to the defects and imperfections of our best actions, as well as to the worst that we ever did, or ever can do.

John 15. 5.

And therefore Christ Himself saith, "That without Him we can do nothing;" nothing that is truly good, nothing that God will accept of without Him: insomuch that without Him our whole lives are but as one continued sin and provocation against Him, in whom we live; as they, who

do not believe in Him, will one day find by woeful experience, notwithstanding all their pretensions to virtue and good works: for whatsoever they may pretend, they can neither exercise any one virtue, nor do any one work that can be properly termed good, and therefore acceptable to God, without Christ.

But by Him, St. Peter here saith, that our "spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God;" and so doth St. Paul too, where he saith, that "we are accepted in the Beloved;" in Him, of whom God the Father said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This was proclaimed by a voice from Heaven upon two several occasions, at His baptism, and at His transfiguration; the better to assure us, that He is the beloved Son, in whom God is pleased to manifest His love and favour to mankind: that as "the law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." All the grace and mercy that we receive from God, comes by Him, particularly that whereby He is graciously pleased to accept of any thing that we sinful mortals do: and therefore in the epistle to the Hebrews, the Apostle prays, that "God would make them perfect in every good work, to do His will, working in them that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ." It is only through Him that God enables us to do good works; and it is only through Him that the good works we do are well pleasing unto God.

Eph. 1. 6.

Matt. 3. 17; 17. 5.

John 1. 17.

Heb. 13. 21.

But how this comes to pass, that what we do should be acceptable to God by another, even by Jesus Christ, is a mystery which "the Angels desire to look into," and the more they look, the more they admire; and so shall we, if we do but cast our eye upon what is revealed of it in God's Holy Word: where we find,

[1 Pet. 1. 12.]

1. That this Jesus Christ is the Eternal Son of God, of one substance with the Father, and that in the fulness of time He took upon Him the form or nature of man, so as to be in one and the same person, both God and man; man in general: not only a particular human person, as every one of us is, but as the "first man Adam" was, one in whom the whole nature of man is contained; who therefore is called also the "second man;" and Adam, that is, man in

1 Cor. 15. 47.

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general, as the "first" was. But with this mighty advantage, that the *first* was only man; the *second* not only man, but God too: God of the same nature with the Father, as well as man of the same nature with all other men.

2. We there find, that as the first man Adam, and in him all mankind broke the law of God, so the second kept it perfectly, never doing any one thing that was there forbidden, nor leaving any one thing undone that was there commanded. But "He went about" continually "doing good," and "fulfilling all righteousness:" so that His whole life as man, was one continued act of obedience to the will of God; which being performed by Him in the whole nature of man, was as much as was required of all that are of that nature, and more too: forasmuch as no more was or could be required of all mankind, than the obedience of so many finite creatures; whereas it was the obedience of a person that is infinite, and therefore infinitely surpassing all that could ever have been done by the whole race of mankind.

[Acts 10. 38; Matt. 3. 15.]

3. We there also find, that He was thus obedient not only through the whole course of His life, but to death itself, "even the death of the cross." He did not only suffer that accursed death, but He suffered it in perfect obedience to the will of God; but death being due only for sin, He never having sinned, could not suffer it for Himself: but as He suffered it in the nature of man, so He suffered it for all that are of that nature. And therefore He is there said to have died for us, and for our sins; to have "tasted death for every man;" and "to have given Himself a ransom for all," for all of that nature in which He died. So that His death was a sufficient price for the redemption of all mankind; it being equivalent to the death of all men; and of infinitely greater worth and value, in that it was the death of an infinite person.

Phil. 2. 8.

Heb. 2. 9.

1 Tim. 2. 6.

4. We there find also that this Divine person, having thus suffered death in the nature of man, He in that rose again, went up into Heaven, and is there exalted at the right hand of God, to be the "Mediator between God and men," in whose nature He is now there, appearing "in the presence of God for us" "as the propitiation for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world." And "is able to save them to

1 Tim. 2. 5; Heb. 9. 24.

1 John 2. 2.

Heb. 7. 25.

the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Lastly, We find in Holy Writ, that they who believe in this Jesus Christ, are said to "be in Him," to "abide in Him," as a member in the body, or a branch in a tree, and so to "partake of Him," and of all He did and suffered upon earth, and of all He is now doing in Heaven; where He looks upon them as His own, His disciples, His servants, His friends, His brethren, His sheep, His peculiar people; and accordingly takes particular care of them, as their Saviour, their Mediator and Advocate with the Father, interceding continually for them, and for them only: "I pray for them," saith He, "I pray not for the world, but for them which Thou hast given Me, for they are Thine." [John 14. 4; 1 John 3. 6, 24.] Heb. 3. 14. John 17. 9.

Now these things being thus briefly laid down together, we may easily see how the spiritual sacrifices, which the "spiritual house" and "holy Priesthood," here spoken of, "offer unto God," come to be acceptable to Him by Jesus Christ. For this spiritual house being wholly made up of such as "come to Christ," and "believe on Him," as we learn from the context, therefore they are built up in Him, as St. Peter here saith, or as St. Paul expresseth it, "In Him they are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit." So that they have a near relation to Him, and an interest in Him, and He in them: they are wholly His, and are actuated and influenced by that Holy Spirit that proceeds from Him; as the members of a body are by the animal spirits that flow from the head. It is by this Spirit of Christ, and so by Christ Himself, that they offer all their spiritual sacrifices, and do all the good works that are required of them; according to that of the Apostle, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." But what is done by Christ or His Holy Spirit, is done by God Himself. And so far as any thing is done by Himself, so far be sure He is well pleased with it, as He is with every thing which He Himself doth. This therefore is one reason wherefore the spiritual sacrifices which His people offer, are "acceptable to God by Jesus Christ," because they are offered by Him, in whom God is well pleased. Ver. 4, 6, 7. Eph. 2. 22. Rom. 8. 9, 13, 14. Phil. 4. 13.

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But although they be thus led by the Spirit of Christ, yet while they are in the body, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit;" so that do what they can, there are many blemishes and imperfections in their "best sacrifices," which would hinder their being "acceptable" unto God, if Christ did not cover them with His "own sacrifice." But He having offered up Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, by virtue of that, He makes atonement and reconciliation for all the sins of those who believe in Him, and particularly for the imperfections of their duties and performances: for which He Himself hath borne the punishment, and therefore intercedes, that God would not be angry or displeased with them; but be graciously pleased to accept of the "imperfect sacrifices" which they offer Him, for the sake of that absolutely perfect sacrifice which He Himself had offered in their stead. And hence it is, that Almighty God having "His sacrifice" always in His eye, overlooks the imperfections of theirs, and accepts of what they do, through the merits of that death which His only-begotten Son hath suffered for them.

[Gal. 5. 17.]

But that nothing might be wanting to render the good works which His servants do by His assistance as "acceptable to God through Him, as it is possible for them to be, He doth not only wash out their spots with His blood, but He adorns them also with His own righteousness, that perfect righteousness which He fulfilled through the whole course of His life. For that also being, as we have seen, performed in the whole nature of man, and therefore applicable to all that are of that nature, He accordingly applies it to all that by faith "come unto Him" for it: as all His faithful people be sure do; as well as St. Paul, when he desired to "be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; the righteousness which is of God by faith." Where we see he desired, and accordingly had another righteousness besides that of the Law, the righteousness which is through the faith of Christ, "who knew no sin," and yet "was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "Who of God was made unto us righteousness as well as wisdom." "The Lord our

Phil. 3. 9.

2 Cor. 5. 21.

1 Cor. 1. 30.

Jer. 23. 6.

righteousness." So that we may every one say, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength." "Strength" to do good works, and "righteousness" to make them acceptable when they are done; as they may well be, seeing it is the righteousness of God Himself, who is "well pleased" with every thing that He Himself doth, and with nothing else. [Isa. 45. 24.]

From hence therefore we may see how the "sacrifices" which His people offer, come to be "acceptable" to God by Jesus Christ, even because they are offered by the assistance of His Holy Spirit, cleansed by the merits of the death He suffered in their stead, and perfected by the righteousness which He Himself performed in their nature. And being begun, continued and finished in and by Himself, He looks upon them as His own works, and is therefore well pleased with them, as He was with every thing He made at first; when it was said, "That God saw every thing that He had made, and behold it was very good." [Gen. 1. 31.]

Now what a mighty encouragement is this to do all the good we can in the world? For who would not please Him that governs all things in it, and disposeth of every thing as He Himself pleaseth! And yet we see, that we little, we sinful creatures upon earth, may do such things as are "acceptable" and well pleasing to the great God of Heaven, though not in themselves, yet by His only-begotten Son Jesus Christ: but for that purpose we must all do such good works as He hath set us. And "whatsoever we do in word or deed, we must do it in the name of the Lord Jesus:" believing and trusting on Him to perfume it with the incense of His ointments, that so it may be "acceptable" to God by Him, and then it will most certainly be so; for we have the word of God Himself here for it, as we have now heard. And therefore when we have offered any sacrifice, or performed any service to Him, we ought not to doubt, but be fully persuaded in our minds, that although there be no merit, but many imperfections in it; yet that God is graciously pleased to accept of it, and will accordingly reward us for it, both in this world and in the next, through the merits and mediation of His Son Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever. [Col. 3. 17.]

SERMON IX.

THE PREPARATORY DUTIES FOR HOLY ORDERS.

Acts xiii. 3.

And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.

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It is our great happiness that we live in so pure and sincere a part of Christ's "Holy Catholic Church," that as we have nothing superfluous, so neither is there any thing wanting that can any way conduce to our eternal Salvation in it, much less any thing that is necessary in order thereunto: as amongst other things, the right "Ordination" of those who administer the means of grace, must needs be acknowledged to be. For seeing we can have no grace or power to do good, but what is derived to us from God, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in the use of the means which He hath established in His Church for that purpose; unless those means be rightly and duly administered, they lose their force and energy, and so can never attain the end wherefore they were established: neither is there any thing more necessary to the right administration of the means of grace, than that they who administer them be "rightly ordained" and authorised to do it, according to the institution and command of Him that did establish them. For seeing they do not work naturally, but only by virtue of the institution and promise annexed to it; unless that be duly observed, we have no ground to expect that the promise should be performed, nor by consequence that they should be effectual to the purposes for which they are used.

And certainly there neither is, nor ever was any provincial or national Church upon earth, wherein the institution of Christ and His Holy Apostles in this particular, hath been more punctually observed, than it is in ours. For as the Bishops and Pastors of our Church have by a successive Imposition of hands, continued all along from the Apostles, received the same Spirit which Christ breathed into them, for the effectual administration of the Word and Sacraments; so do they after the same manner confer the same Spirit upon others, even by "laying their hands" upon them, according to the institution of Christ, made known and confirmed to us by the practice of His Apostles and Catholic Church in all ages since. And herein it is, that the essence of "Ordination" doth properly consist. Neither doth our Church thus strictly observe this institution, by using this Apostolical "Imposition of hands" upon such occasions in general only, but likewise she useth the same means and methods that the Apostles did, for the preparing those whom she intends to ordain for the receiving the "Holy Ghost" by such "Imposition of hands," and for the more effectual obtaining it for them. For which purpose she appoints certain seasons every year for this great work, and requires that all her members join together at these times in "fasting" and "prayer" to Almighty God for His direction of the Bishops who shall then ordain, and for His grace and heavenly benediction upon those who shall be "then ordained to any holy function:" and that this is exactly agreeable to the practice of the Holy Apostles in this case, is plain from these words; "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." They first "fasted" and "prayed," and then "laid their hands" on them.

The occasion of the words in brief was this: there were in the Church of Antioch, five persons eminent for the gift of prophesying and teaching; and as they were on a certain time together, fasting and praying, and ministering to the Lord, the Holy Ghost, either by inspiration, they being Prophets, or by some particular revelation, said to them, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul," two of the company, "for the work whereunto I have called them." From [Ver. 2.]

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whence we may observe, how necessary it is that they who are admitted to the sacred Ministry of the Gospel, be *externally* as well as *internally* called, and publicly ordained to it by the Church. Saul was called before by Christ Himself, and both he and Barnabas were Prophets divinely inspired; and yet for all that, they must be "outwardly called" and "ordained" by the Chuch too, before they could be sent out to preach the Gospel. Yet the Holy Ghost, and so God Himself commands it, who at the same time that He commanded them to be "separated" or "ordained" by the Church, could, if He pleased, have come upon them without the "Imposition of hands," or the ministry of any men. But howsoever, to keep up the order which Christ hath established in His Church, He only signifies His pleasure that He would have them "ordained;" and then those Prophets and Teachers, which are supposed to be some Bishops or Pastors in and about Antioch, must "lay their hands" upon them, that so they might by that means "receive the Holy Ghost" and power to administer the Word and Sacraments. Which is a full and undeniable argument for the necessity of persons being solemnly and publicly ordained by the "Imposition of hands," before they undertake to minister in the Church, whatsoever gifts, or parts, or "inward calling" they pretend to. For none certainly could ever pretend to any "inward call" to the ministry more than Paul and Barnabas might; and yet it seems that would not serve their turn, but they must be outwardly called and ordained by the Church too, before they presume to meddle with any holy function: and questionless the great reason why this is so punctually described and recorded by the Holy Ghost in Scripture, was, that all people might take notice of it, and not expect that the Holy Ghost should ordain them Himself, when He would not ordain those eminent Saints Paul and Barnabas Himself, but leaves them to the Church, and expressly commands them to be ordained by her: "Separate," saith He, "Barnabas and Saul to the work whereunto I have called them." It seems He Himself had called them to the work, and for all that they must be ordained by men, before they would enter upon it.

The Holy Ghost having thus commanded the Prophets and Teachers there present to separate these two persons, it follows, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands upon them, they sent them away." From whence we may observe,

I. That although the Holy Ghost said only, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul," they knew well enough what He meant by it, even that they should "lay their hands" upon them, and so ordain or separate them "to the work whereunto they were called." Which plainly shews, that the rite or ceremony of "laying hands" upon those who were to be set apart for the work of the Ministry, was not only commonly known at that time, but looked upon as necessary to be observed: and that it was approved of by the Holy Ghost Himself, is manifest from the following words: for so soon as hands were laid upon them, it is said, that "they were sent by the Holy Ghost." Ver. 4.

II. We may observe hence, that before they would lay their hands upon Barnabas and Saul, they fasted and prayed; which certainly is recorded on purpose for our imitation, that the Church in all ages might follow so good an example, and not lay hands upon any persons for the admitting them to an holy function, until they have fasted and prayed, as they here did.

Now we, in imitation of this holy example, and in conformity to the practice of the Catholic and Apostolic Church, being now assembled here upon the same occasion as these were, when they ordained Barnabas and Saul, even to fast and pray, in order to the "laying on of hands" upon persons to be set apart for the sacred Ministry of the Church; it may not be amiss, if we consider a little how reasonable and necessary it is that we should do so. It is true, this one instance is not only a sufficient warrant for it, but it lays an obligation upon us to do it. But howsoever, as we cannot imagine but they had great reasons for it, so it must needs be very convenient to consider what they were, both to justify our present assembling, and to excite those who are to be ordained, to a more serious performance of these two great duties of "fasting" and "prayer," as preparatory to their Ordination.

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First, as for "fasting," we shall soon acknowledge the great use of that in order to the fitting persons for "Ordination," if we do but consider how much it conduceth towards an holy and good life, and to the fitting and qualifying us for the service of God in general, both in its own nature, and by virtue of the promises which God hath made to it.

In what sense "fasting" in itself is one great means of our being and doing good, we shall easily understand, if we do but consider two things:

I. That the soul, the seat of all virtue and goodness, although it be a distinct substance from the body, and so is capable of acting separately from it, even whilst it is in it; yet so long as it is tied to the body, and actually informs it, so as to be but one part of that composition which we call man, it ordinarily makes use of the organs of the body, especially of the animal spirits, in all its actions. And these only are properly called "human actions," which are thus performed by the whole man: which therefore cannot but depend very much upon the temper of the body that concurs towards the performance of them, as we find by daily experience they do; for if our bodies be out of tune, so are our minds too. If any thing affects our heads, disturbs our brains, and so disorders the animal spirits, which the soul makes use of in its operations, they are likewise disorderly and irregular. As in music, though the artist be ever so skilful, yet if his instrument be out of tune, there can be no harmony or melody in what he plays upon it. Yea, none of us but may easily observe, that whatsoever humour prevails most in the body, as phlegm, choler, melancholy, or the like, our actions are usually tainted with it; insomuch, that by them we may easily discover what that humour is which is most predominant. From whence it plainly appears, that so long as the soul is in the body, although it was designed to rule and govern it, yet it is apt to be governed by it, and to indulge and humour it so far, as to follow not its own reason and judgment, but the more impetuous inclinations of the sensitive part, although it be to its own ruin and destruction.

II. Hence therefore it necessarily follows, in the next place, that "fasting" and "abstinence" cannot but conduce

much to the exercise of true piety and virtue, in that, if duly performed, it "keeps the body under," and "brings it into subjection" to the soul: by which means the soul being kept always in its throne, with full power and authority over its subjects, the inferior faculties, and being under no restraint from them, its reasonings would be always clear, its judgments sound, its counsels deliberate, it would always act like itself, a rational and spiritual substance, and so would be as free from all brutish and sensual vices, as when separate from the body, which inclines it to them; and then it will begin to relish spiritual objects, as suitable to its own nature: for it will look upon virtue and vice, not as they are falsely represented by the imagination corrupted with the humours of the body, but as they are in themselves, and and so discern clearly how lively and amiable the former is, how odious and detestable the latter, and by consequence exert all its power to follow the one, and avoid the other. [1 Cor. 9. 27.]

To explain this more fully, I might descend to particulars, and shew how "fasting and abstinence," by "keeping the body under," doth of itself contribute very much to the mortifying of most lusts, and to the quickening the contrary graces in us. For which end, I need not instance in gluttony and drunkenness: for these being directly contrary, yea, contradictory to true fasting; where this is rightly observed, these vices must needs cease of their own accord, and the contrary virtues of temperance and sobriety take their places. The same may be said of luxury and uncleanness, for that proceeding only from too great a plenitude and luxuriancy of humours in the body, if the body be kept under, as it ought, we can have no inclinations to such vices as these.

But there are other vices also, which at first sight may seem more remote to our present purpose, as not depending so much upon the temper of the body; and yet they also may be very much prevented or cured by fasting. As for example: Are we apt to be angry and peevish, to fret and be disturbed at every little thing that happens, as many are? This commonly proceeds from immoderate diet, or constant feeding to the full, which breeds abundance of choler, and overheats the animal spirits, whereby they are apt to take fire, and be enflamed at every thing that occurs

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contrary to our present desires. But by fasting and constant abstinence, the choler would be abated, the spirits cooled, and so the mind reduced to a sedate, meek, and gentle temper.

And so for self-conceitedness, covetousness, and suchlike sins as proceed commonly from the corruption of the fancy, caused by those malignant humours, which by reason of overmuch eating are exhaled from the stomach into the head, and there disturb the imagination, so as to represent things as in a magnifying glass, and make them seem what they are not, great and good: fasting prevents the very engendering of such fumes, and by consequence, the corruption of the fancy by them. By which means, the mind is able to judge all things as they are, and so to see clearly that there is nothing in ourselves that we can justly be proud of, nor in this world, that we can in reason desire or covet to make us happy.

And then on the other side, as it helps towards the suppressing of most vices, so also towards the exercise of grace and virtue, especially to the due performance of our devotions, whether public or private. For whence comes that dulness, whence those distractions which we commonly find at such times? whence, I say, come they, but from that hurry of gross vapours in the brain, which obstruct its passages, and crowd about it so disorderly, that the soul cannot, without much time and pains, rally them together, and reduce them into such an order, as to make any tolerable use of them? And therefore as these distractions are caused by overmuch eating, so they may in a great measure be cured by fasting. Hence it is, that none of us but may find by experience, that we can never perform any spiritual exercise with that life and vigour, with that cheerfulness and alacrity, with that constant presence and composure of mind, as when our bodies are empty, and so "kept under," as to be in "due subjection" to the soul.

I might instance in many other particulars, whence to shew how fasting doth of itself contribute much to the extirpation of most vices, and to the planting and growth of true virtue and goodness in us. But most others depend upon, or may be referred to these already mentioned; and

therefore there is the same reason for them, as there is for these: so that we may justly conclude this with a remarkable passage of St. Jerome,[1] in his Epistle to Celantia, where he saith, that fasting and abstinence, *Non castitati tantummodò, sed omnibus omnino virtutibus opitulatur.*

But the great and principal reason of all, why it doth so, is still behind: and that is, because fasting is so pleasing and acceptable to Almighty God, that he hath promised a blessing, a reward to it, whensoever it is rightly performed; and that too, not by the mouth of a Prophet, an Apostle, an Angel, but by His own Divine mouth, when He was here upon earth. For our Lord Himself saith, "When thou fastest, Matt. 6. 18. anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." From whence it is plain, that if a man fast, not out of a vain ostentation "to be seen of men," and thought holy, but out of a sincere design "to keep his body under," and so fit himself the better for the service of God, that man shall most certainly be rewarded for it. But what reward shall we have? Why, God will bless and sanctify it to the great ends and purposes for which it is designed. Fasting, as I have shewn, doth conduce much to our being holy, but it cannot make us so: that is only in the power of God, the only fountain of all true grace and holiness: but He being well pleased with fasting, where it is duly performed, doth by His own grace and spirit make it effectual for the subduing our lusts, and for the performance of all holy and good works.

For our better understanding of this, we may consider, that although God can work either with means or without means, or by contrary means, as He himself sees good, yet He ordinarily makes use of the most fit and proper means that can be used, for the effecting of what He designs; and it is presumption in us to expect He should do otherwise. But fasting, as we have seen already, is a very fit and proper means, as of itself conducing much to a virtuous and good life. And, therefore, they who give themselves to fasting

[1] ["Non ad solam hoc facit castitatem: non enim huic tantummodo, sed omnibus omnino virtutibus abstinentia opitulatur." Hieron. tom. iv. par. 2da. p. 818. epist. cix.; Paulin. Episcop. ad Celantiam de Ratione pie vivendi.]

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and abstinence, as they ought to do, are always in God's way, using the proper means for the obtaining of true grace and virtue; and so need not doubt but He will bestow it upon them. Whereas, they who refuse or neglect such means, have no more ground to expect His blessing and assistance, than they have to expect that He should work miracles for them.

And besides that, although the most High God, the chiefest, the only good, be always ready, and free to communicate of Himself, and to distribute the graces of His spirit, it is to those who are rightly disposed for the receipt of them, whose bodies as well as souls are fitted for the inhabitation of the Spirit, or, as the Apostle words it, to be the [1 Cor. 6. 19.] "Temple of the Holy Ghost." But certainly no bodies are so fit and proper for so Divine a guest, as those which by fasting and abstinence are kept in continual subjection to the soul: for it being the soul that is primarily inspired and sanctified by the Spirit, unless the body be subject to the soul, it will not be subject to the Spirit that is in it; but the Gal. 5. 17. "Flesh will lust against the Spirit." Whereas, if the body be kept clean and pure, always at the beck of the soul, ready and willing to observe its commands, then the Spirit that enlightens, actuates, and quickens the soul, will with great facility diffuse its influences over the whole man, so as to sanctify it throughout: for then the body being subject to the soul, and the soul to the Spirit, as the Spirit is, so will the soul and body be in their capacities pure and holy.

Hence it is, that the greatest discoveries that God hath made of Himself to men, and the most powerful effects of the Spirit upon them, have usually been when they were fasting, and so in a right disposition for them. Exod. 34. 28. Thus "Moses was fasting forty days and forty nights," even all the while that he was conversing with God upon Mount Sinai, and received the Law from Him. 1 Kings 19. 8. "Elias had fasted forty days and forty nights," when God discoursed so familiarly with him upon Mount Horeb. Our Lord Himself also, though He had no need of it, His body being always perfectly subject to His soul, yet for our Matt. 4. 2, 11. example and imitation "fasted forty days and forty nights;" even all the while that he was in the Wilderness overcoming Dan. 9. 3, 21. the Devil, and had the angels to minister unto him. Daniel

was fasting when the angel Gabriel was sent to acquaint him with the precise time of the Messiah's coming. Cornelius, by whose conversion the door of Salvation was open to the Gentiles, was also fasting when the Angel was sent to instruct him how to get to Heaven. And to name no more, in this very place where my text is, the Disciples at Antioch were fasting, when the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner spoke unto them, saying, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work to which I have called them." By all which it appears, that when men are fasting, and so their bodies are subject to their souls, then God takes the opportunity of manifesting Himself and His pleasure to them, and also directing and assisting them in the way to bliss: and by consequence, that fasting is a duty of greater moment than it is commonly thought to be.

Acts 10. 30.

Now these things being premised concerning fasting in general, it is easy to conclude, that it is very reasonable at least, if not necessary, to fast upon such occasions as these. For, seeing that abstinence and fasting conduce so much to the suppressing of vice, and to the exercise of virtue, to the correcting the errors of our fancies, and the disorder of our passions, to the quickening and invigorating our Devotion, and so to the more effectual obtaining the good things we want and desire at the hands of God; it must needs be very requisite, that we, and the whole Church, join heartily and sincerely in it, when any persons are to be admitted into Holy Orders, that so we may the more effectually implore the grace and favour of the All-wise God, in "guiding and governing the minds of His servants, the Bishops and Pastors of His flock, so that they may make choice of such persons as He Himself knows to be fit to serve in the Sacred Ministry of the Church, and in assisting those which shall be ordained, with His own grace and benediction, that both by their life and doctrine they may set forth His glory, and set forward the Salvation of all Men, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

And as for those who are to be ordained to an Holy Function, nothing certainly can be more necessary than for them to bring their bodies by fasting and abstinence into a due subjection to their minds, that so they may be rightly prepared and disposed for these great blessings we pray for,

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and particularly for the receiving the Holy Ghost, which shall be conferred upon them at their Ordination; that there be no obstacle or impediment in themselves, but that they may be ready both in soul and body, to receive not only power and authority to administer the Word and Sacraments, but likewise such aids and assistances of the Holy Spirit, whereby they may be enabled to do it "carefully, sincerely, and effectually."

And this seems to be the reason why the Disciples here fasted both before and at the Ordination of Barnabas and Saul. For before they ordained them, or so much as had pitched upon whom to ordain, they fasted; for it is said, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul." From whence it seems very probable, that the Church being very much enlarged, found it necessary at this time to increase the number of their Pastors, and not knowing whom to choose, they set apart some time for fasting and prayer to Almighty God, that He would be pleased to direct them in it, who accordingly did so. For, as they were thus ministering to Him, and fasting, "the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul." Now, what they did then, we are now doing: it is upon the same account that we are now ministering to the Lord, and fasting. And although we have no ground to expect any such immediate revelation as they had, yet if we do but perform this duty as sincerely as they did, there can be no doubt but that Almighty God will hear our prayers as well as theirs, and direct the Bishops and Pastors of our Church, as He did them, to choose such persons as He Himself approves of and would have ordained to the Ministry of His Church.

Neither did they think it enough to fast before, in order to their making a good choice of persons to be ordained, but they fasted again at the very time when they ordained those, which by the direction of the Holy Ghost they had made choice of for the purposes aforesaid, even for the more effectual obtaining the Spirit for them, and for the better fitting and qualifying of them for the receiving of it; which therefore I humbly conceive is very convenient, if not necessary, to be observed by us too.

But here we may further take notice, that as they fasted, so they prayed too at the same time; which two duties are frequently put together. Daniel and Cornelius before-mentioned, were fasting and praying when the Angel came to them. Our Lord tells us, "there are some kind of Devils that cannot be cast out but by fasting and praying:" and to come nearer to our present purpose, "when St. Paul and Barnabas had ordained them Elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting," saith St. Luke. From whence it appears that they ordained others after the same manner as they themselves were ordained, even with fasting and praying: and doubtless, the same course ought always to be taken in conferring Orders; not only from the example of the Holy Apostles, though that would be sufficient, but likewise from the reason of the thing: for fasting upon this occasion, is chiefly designed for the fixing our thoughts, for the exciting our affections, and for the disposing our minds the better to pray and supplicate the Divine Majesty, for His direction in the choice of fit persons to be ordained, and for His blessing upon them whom they have ordained to any Holy Function: for which purpose, no better means can be used than prayer joined with fasting. For though "the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous," of itself availeth much, when it is joined with fasting, it availeth more; as our Lord Himself plainly intimates in the passage before cited, where He saith, that "such Devils are not cast out but by prayer and fasting together." Some kind of Devils may be cast out by prayer, without fasting; but none can withstand them when they go together: and the reason seems to be, because fasting is not only of itself acceptable to God, but also because by fasting our bodies being kept under, our hearts will rise higher, and our minds be more intent, our affections more pure, and our desires more earnest, and by consequence our prayers more effectual and prevalent with Almighty God, for His granting the good things we pray for.

[Matt. 17. 21.]

Acts 14. 23.

[James 5. 16.]

Especially, they who are to be ordained, must be sure not only to fast, but to pray too: and as the Church prays for them, so they must pray for themselves too, that God would vouchsafe to bestow His Spirit upon them; and that He will

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do it if sincerely desired, we have the word of Christ Himself for it, saying, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good things unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" Which we see exactly verified in my text; for Saul and Barnabas having fasted and prayed, and so received Imposition of hands, it presently follows, that "they were sent forth by the Holy Ghost," which was conferred upon them by the "Imposition of hands," according as they had prayed it might.

Luke 11. 13.

But it is now time to apply what hath been said upon this subject in general, to you who are to be ordained, and whom it more particularly concerns; and therefore I shall now address myself wholly unto you.

Beloved Brethren,

I hope you are all sensible of the greatness of that Office which you now desire should be conferred upon you, and by consequence, of the necessity that lies upon you to prepare yourselves for it. And you have now heard how you ought to do that, even as the first Ministers of the Gospel did it, that is, by fasting and prayer: And therefore I would not have you look upon it as an unnecessary task and burden imposed upon you, to spend this and other days this week in the performance of these great duties; for you see it is no more than what the first preachers of the Gospel did, and the reason of the thing requires from you: insomuch, that you should rather give thanks to God, that you are put in mind to do those things which are so necessary to the preparing and qualifying of you for the great work you are now to undertake. Having therefore so happy an opportunity put into your hands, let me advise and beseech you, to be as diligent and serious in the use and improvement of it: devote this, and the other days set apart for prayer and fasting upon this occasion, wholly to your performance of the great duties they are set apart for. Think it not enough that you have the prayers of other devout people for you, nor think it sufficient that you yourselves are here present this morning, and join with us in the public prayers of the Church, neither yet think it sufficient that you have heard something

of the usefulness and necessity of fasting and praying, in order to the preparing yourselves for Ordination, but act accordingly. Fast and pray in private, as well as public, that you may be worthy "to receive the Holy Ghost." And in your private devotions, I think it would do very well if you observed these few rules.

1. If you have it not already, get the Form or Office of our Church according to which you are to be ordained; and consider seriously what is there said concerning the dignity and difficulty of that office which you are now to be admitted unto; and do not content yourselves with reading over that excellent exhortation and instruction which is there given you, but weigh every word and sentence in it: for there is nothing in it but what highly concerns you to understand and remember; for it is supposed that you have well weighed and pondered those things before you go to be ordained; and that you have clearly determined to apply yourselves wholly to that Office, whereunto it pleaseth God to call you.

Having thus possessed your minds with a due sense of the greatness and excellency of that work you are called to, and of the end and design of your being called to it; in the next place consider seriously the several questions, which in the Name of God, and of His Church, shall be put to you, when you come to be ordained; and do not resolve to give those answers to them which the Church requires, before you have considered whether you can really and in conscience do it.

As for example: The first question propounded to those who shall be ordained Deacons, is this, "Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost, to take upon you this Office and Ministration, to serve God for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of His people?" Which certainly is a question that you cannot easily answer, unless you have duly weighed it before-hand. And therefore in your private retirements, search impartially into your own hearts, and bethink yourselves seriously, whether by the Providence of God, and the assistance of His Holy Spirit, you are fitted and qualified for that Office, and sincerely desire to be admitted into it, for no other, or at least no greater end or purpose, than that you may promote

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God's glory, and edify His people. And if upon due examination you find it is really so with you, then you have as good ground to trust that you are "moved to it by the Holy Ghost," as if he had expressly commanded you "to be separated to the work whereunto He hath called you," as He did here to Barnabas and Saul.

I shall not prevent your private meditations by running over all the questions here, but only desire that you would all do it, every one by himself, and that you would deal plainly and faithfully with God and your own consciences in it; as considering that every answer you there make in the presence of God, upon so solemn an occasion as that is, is and ought to be accounted every jot as sacred as any oath whatever, and doth as much bind and oblige you to the performance of what you there promise. And therefore such answers are not to be made rashly, neither must you venture upon obliging yourselves to God and His Church, by such solemn promises as these are, without mature deliberation and sincere resolutions to perform them, "the Lord being your helper."

And indeed by that time that you have duly weighed the Office you are to be admitted into, and the promises you make when you are admitted into it, you will soon find how difficult, or rather impossible it will be to discharge the one or the other, without the special grace and assistance of God Himself; which therefore you must be sure to pray for in private as well as public. For this is the other great and necessary duty which is now incumbent upon you, and which you must perform with all the seriousness, vigour, and earnestness that you possibly can; as knowing that both your own, and other men's salvation, depends very much upon it. And therefore when you are got into your closets, where none sees you but that God whose Ministers you are now to be, make it your humble and hearty request to Him, that as He is pleased to confer this Office upon you, so He would vouchsafe you such a measure of His Holy Spirit, whereby you may be enabled faithfully to execute the same according to His will and your own promise.

And if you thus sincerely perform both your public and private devotions, and prepare yourselves by Fasting and

Prayer against the time of your Ordination; as you need not, so you ought not to doubt but God will then hear your prayers, and bestow His Spirit upon you, so as not only to authorize, but likewise to assist you in the administering His Word and Sacraments, and in the faithful discharge of the Office He calls you to. For which purpose it is very expedient that while the Bishop's hands are upon your heads, especially when he saith in the Ordination of Priests, "Receive the Holy Ghost," your minds be fully intent upon Almighty God, and your faith fixed upon the promises that he hath made to that purpose, in Jesus Christ our Lord: for then He will most certainly grant your desires, and you will receive the Holy Ghost for the effectual discharge of your duty, both as Ministers and Christians, that you may both shew others the way to bliss, and walk in it yourselves.

Having thus considered how you ought to prepare yourselves for your Ordination, and how to carry yourselves at it, I must desire you, in the last place, to have a care of yourselves afterwards too. For which purpose, when you are ordained, always keep it in your minds, what relation you then stand in to Christ, as being his Ministers, the "stewards of the manifold mysteries of God," and behave yourselves accordingly. For remember, that the efficacy of the Word and Sacraments administered by you, depends not upon your small qualification, but upon Christ's "Institution, and His promises annexed" to it. And therefore you may be instruments in God's hand for the saving of others, and yet you yourselves may be damned. [1 Cor. 4. 1. 1 Pet. 4. 10.] [Art. 26.]

This St. Paul himself was very sensible of, and therefore saith, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away." And what a sad thing would it be, that others should be brought to Heaven by your means, and yet yourselves shut out? For the preventing whereof, I would advise you to take this course: 1 Cor. 9. 27.

First, Do as St. Paul did, "keep your body under, and bring it into subjection," by fasting and abstinence. Which is every whit as necessary, after you are ordained, to the execution of your Office, as it was before in order to your

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admission into it: and not only to the due execution of your Office, but likewise to your performance of all other duties that are required of you, in order to your eternal Salvation. For if so eminent a Saint, so great an Apostle as St. Paul, was forced to keep his body under, lest after all his care and pains in shewing others the way to Heaven, he himself should miss of it; sure you and I had need to fast and pray to some purpose, lest when we have spent our days in administering the Word and Sacraments for the Salvation of others, we ourselves should perish everlastingly.

Moreover, that you may never forget the duties which your great Master, Christ, requires of you, nor yet the promises you made to Him when you were ordained; it would be very well, if you would often, especially upon fasting-days, read over the offices for making or ordering Priests and Deacons, and consider what questions were then propounded to you, and how you answered them. I need not tell you what advantage this would be to you: do but make trial of it, and you yourselves will find it by your own experience.

Another thing that I would mind you of, is this, that although your Ordination respect not the Church of England in particular, but Christ's Holy Catholic Church; so that when ordained Priests or Deacons here, you are so all the world over: yet so long as you continue to execute your Office in our Church, be sure to observe punctually the Orders and Constitutions of it; which, as it is your duty, in obedience to the Church you live in, so you will find it to be your interest too. For our Church hath taken care that all the means of Grace and Salvation should be duly administered to all that live in her Communion: and you will be now in the number of those to whom the administration of them is committed. If you therefore keep close to the rules that she hath set you in it, it will ease you of a great deal of care and trouble, for you need look no further for the full discharging the trust reposed in you: for by this means you will discharge it faithfully, and will be found to have done so, when you come to stand before our Lord's tribunal at the last day. Whereas if you, through carelessness or self-merit, shall neglect, diminish, or alter any thing that

the Church, out of obedience to Christ's commands, hath provided for the Salvation of those committed to your charge, or any of them by that means perish, their blood will be required at your hands.

And then, lastly, as Christ is pleased to honour you so far as to admit you into His own Ministry, endeavour all you can to adorn it with an holy and good life. Adjust your actions to all the rules that He hath prescribed in His Holy Gospel. Live above the world, and make it your constant, your only care, study, and business, to serve, honour, and obey your great Lord and Master in Heaven. In short, "as He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;" that so you may shew your flock the way to Heaven, both by your precept and example. Do this, and you will save yourselves, as well as them that hear you. "Which God of His infinite mercy grant we may all do, through Jesus our Lord: to whom, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever."

[1 Pet. 1. 15.]

SERMON X.

THE EFFICACY OF FAITH ON THE MINISTRATION OF THE WORD.

1 Thess. ii. 13.

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but, as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

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"In you that believe;" there lies the emphasis, and the foundation of all that I design at present to build upon these words. St. Paul having been at Thessalonica, and preached the Word of God to the inhabitants of that city, many of them hearkened to what he said, not as spoken by a philosopher, but by an Apostle sent from God; and therefore "received" it, not as "the word of men," which may or may not be true, but as it really was, the infallible "Word of God" Himself. For this, the Apostle here tells them, "he thanked God without ceasing," ascribing it wholly to His power and goodness; and puts them withal in mind of two things: First, of the great force and efficacy which the Word they so received had upon them; "the Word of God," saith he, "which effectually worketh in you." It had, it seems, its whole effect, its end, its perfect work upon them, insomuch that, as he saith in the following words, "they were now able to suffer as much for the sake of Christ as the Churches in Judea did." And then, secondly, he acquaints them also, how the Word of God came to have so much power upon them, even because they believed it; "which effectually worketh," saith he, "in you that believe." In you, and none else, and in you only as believing it, without which they

could not have been wrought upon, nor would have received any benefit at all by it. According to that also of the Apostle to the Hebrews, where speaking of the Gospel preached to the Jews under the Law, he saith, "The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." But the Apostle in my text speaks only in the present tense, ὃς ἐνεργεῖται, "which effectually worketh," not which wrought only when ye heard it, but doth so now, ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν, 'in you believing,' or 'that do believe.' As if he had said, Seeing you still believe the Word you heard, it still continues to work effectually in you. Heb. 4. 2.

I have been the more particular in explaining the words to you, that you may better see into the ground of what I would observe from them, which is, that the efficacy of God's Holy Word upon our minds depends upon our believing it; that whatsoever we hear, can make no impressions at all upon us, unless we believe it, nor any longer than we do believe it. But so long as we continue to believe what is preached to us out of God's Word, so long it will "work effectually" in us, towards the "bringing us out of darkness into light, from the power of Satan unto God." [Acts 26. 18.]

The understanding of this will be of great use to shew both where the fault lies, that so many in our age are no better for having the Word of God so often preached to them, and also how we may be always the better for it: for which purpose therefore we shall first consider what we are to understand by the "Word of God," and then what by "believing" it.

By the Word of God, we are to understand the whole system of Divine Revelations, as they are now contained in the Books of the Old and New Testament; "for all Scripture being given by inspiration of God;" it is all, one part as well as another, equally the Word of God: so that we have the Word of God Himself, that whatsoever is there commanded or forbidden, it is His will that we should or should not do it; that whatsoever is there threatened against impenitent sinners, or promised to the penitent, He Himself will see it fulfilled; that whatsoever is there recorded to be said or done, was accordingly said or done, just as it is there recorded; that whatsoever is there foretold, shall certainly 2 Tim. 3. 16.

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come to pass; and that whatsoever is there affirmed, is infallibly true, as being affirmed by Him who cannot lie. And by our "believing" all this, we are to understand our being fully persuaded of the truth and certainty of it, in a manner suitable to the ground that we have for it, even the "Word of God" Himself, which being the firmest ground we can have for any thing in the world, we ought to be persuaded in the highest manner that can be, of every thing that is there written.

This being premised in general, it will be easy to demonstrate the truth of this proposition, that "the Word" of God, howsoever it is preached or made known, "effectually worketh in them that believe it." For we find by constant experience, that a firm belief or full persuasion of any thing, even in this world, hath that power over our minds, that it carrieth all our affections after it. If we really believe a thing to be good for us, we cannot but love it, and desire it, and labour after it, and be glad when we have got it. If we really believe a thing to be evil or hurtful to us, we cannot but hate it, and abhor it, and shun it, and be troubled when it falls upon us: and this, although our belief or persuasion be grounded only upon our own fancies, or corrupt reason, or upon the testimony of our fellow-creatures upon earth; how much more, when it is grounded upon the testimony of God Himself? "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater." It is indeed the greatest that can be in the world. And therefore such things as God Himself hath attested, and we accordingly believe as we ought upon His testimony or witness, must needs prevail the most powerfully upon us, and "work" the most "effectually" in us, that it is possible for any thing in the world to do.

1 John 5. 9.

To make this the more plain and easy to be understood, I shall briefly run through the several parts of God's Holy Word, and shew how each of them operates upon a "believing" mind. Now all that is there written may be reduced to these few heads: Commands, Threatenings, Promises, Histories, Predictions, and Affirmations. Every one of which hath its proper and peculiar way of working upon the minds of men; but they all do it "effectually" in those who "believe."

I. By the Commands, I mean all such moral laws and precepts which are recorded in Holy Scripture, as enacted by God Himself, or, which is the same, by His Holy Spirit in the Prophets and Apostles. All which laws have equally their authority and sanction from the Supreme Lawgiver, the universal Governor of the World, who hath been pleased to make and publish them, that all mankind might know how to govern themselves, their thoughts, their words, and their actions, all according to His Divine will and pleasure. Now when we read or hear of any of these commandments, if at the same time we firmly "believe," and are fully persuaded in our minds, that they are prescribed to us by the Almighty Creator, Preserver, and Disposer of all things in the world; our consciences must needs be touched, and our hearts affected with a quick sense of the many obligations that lie upon us to observe them with an holy fear, lest we should ever break them, and with steady resolutions to keep them as punctually as we can: as we see in the children of Israel, when the Law was proclaimed upon Mount Sinai with thunderings and lightnings, and other demonstrations of the Divine glory and greatness, whereby the people were convinced, that it was indeed the Law of God, and that He Himself proclaimed it; how were they were terrified at it, and resolved to keep it! they desired to see no more such terrible sights, but were ready now to do whatsoever Moses should tell them was the will of God. For they said to him, "Go thou near, and hear all that the Lord our God shall say; and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee, and we will hear it, and do it." So effectually did the Word of God work in them, so long as they believed it; and so it doth in all that hear of the laws of God, so long as they really believe them to be His. As all the moral commandments are, which we find written in the Holy Scriptures, although they were not promulged in such an extraordinary and astonishing manner as the ten were upon Mount Sinai, but by the still voice of His Holy Spirit in the Prophets. They are all equally the commands of Almighty God; which whosoever believes, when he hears them delivered and made known to him, he must needs receive them with that reverence and godly fear, that will work up his

Deut. 5. 27.

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mind into fervent desires and sincere endeavours to observe and keep them. Insomuch that He who is not so wrought upon by them, may be confident, that whatsoever he may think or say, he is not fully persuaded that they are the laws of the Supreme Judge and Governor of the world; if he was, he would soon find them "working effectually" in him.

II. Especially if he considers withal, the penalty which God hath threatened against those who break His laws, nothing less than death itself. When God commanded Adam not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and
Gen. 2. 17. evil, He told him at the same time, "that in the day that he eat thereof, he should surely die:" which if Adam had believed, he would never have eaten of that tree. And therefore the Serpent had no other way to prevail with him to do
Gen. 3. 4. it, but by persuading him that "he should not die." So it is to this day; in that God was pleased to threaten the first sin with death, He thereby sufficiently declared that all sin should be punished with death, which the Apostle therefore
Rom. 6. 23. saith, "is the wages of sin;" of Sin in general, one as well as another. God hath threatened death against every sin, death in its fullest extent and latitude, as comprizing under it all the curses and miseries that mankind is capable of. Hence it is, that He denounced so many curses against those
Deut. 28. [15.] "who would not observe to do whatsoever He had commanded." And how exactly they were all executed upon the children of Israel, may easily appear to any one that compares what Moses hath there written, with what Josephus hath recorded concerning the destruction of Hierusalem, by the Romans, in his "History of the Jewish War;" where we find all the curses which are there threatened, so literally fulfilled upon that sinful nation, that it may serve as a comment upon the aforesaid text. And howsoever other people may flatter themselves for a while, with the hopes of impunity for their sins, notwithstanding that they continue in them, the curse of God will most certainly one time or other fall upon them for it: nay, it is upon them already; for God
Gal. 3. 10. hath said, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all
Deut. 27. 26. things which are written in the book of the law to do them." They are already cursed, whether they see it or no, and they

shall find they are so, whether they will or no, when Christ shall say to them, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." For this we have the Word of God Himself, which if men did really believe, how effectually would it work in them! it would soon turn their stomachs against all manner of sin, as that which brings the curse of God upon them, and so is the only cause of all the troubles they meet with in this world, and without sincere repentance will ruin and destroy them for ever. Matt. 25. 41.

III. The same may be said of the Promises which God hath made to those who keep His laws, which are so many and so great, that if men did but really believe them, they would need no other arguments to persuade them to do whatsoever He hath commanded: for to those who do so, He hath promised all the good, all the best things, yea, all things that are in the world; "all shall be theirs." "And all shall work together for their good." And who can forbear to do that which he believes will do him good, although it be only one particular good, and although he hath no other ground to believe it, but because a wise and an honest man, as he supposes, hath told him so? How much more, when the all-wise, almighty, all-good, and gracious God hath said, that "they who obey and serve Him, shall have all the good things they can desire," as we have all the ground that can be to believe it, so no man can really believe it, but he must strive all he can to obey and serve Him: which whosoever doth not do, whatsoever he may pretend, I am sure he doth not truly believe God's Word; for "true faith worketh by love;" but "love is the fulfilling of the whole law." And therefore he that doth not endeavour to the utmost of his power, to fulfil the whole law of God, we may be confident that he doth not truly believe His Word and promise to them that do so; and that is the reason, the only reason that it hath no effect upon him. 1 Cor. 3. 21. Rom. 8. 28. Gal. 5. 6. Rom. 13. 10. Gal. 5. 14.

But in those who believe, it works so effectually, that it puts them upon constant endeavours to do whatsoever God hath commanded; it inspires them with courage and resolution in it; it keeps them "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as they know 1 Cor. 15. 58.

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that their labour is not in vain in the Lord." They know, they are sure that all the pains they take for Him, will turn to good account for themselves: they have God's Word for it, the best security in the world; and therefore they never think that they can lay out too much upon it.

And as the Word and promise of God animates and encourageth those who believe, to obey Him in all things which He hath commanded, so it enables them also to put their whole trust and confidence on Him for all things that He hath promised, that is, for all things that can any way conduce to their good and welfare: by which means, whatsoever happens, their "hearts are always fixed, trusting in the Lord," to defend and keep them according His Word, which they are confident can never fail; as we see in the Apostle, God "hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee: so that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." So in all the promises which God hath made, they who believe can boldly say, that He will make them good. This is that faith which is so acceptable to God, that by it we are accepted of as righteous before Him, through His beloved Son, in whom all His promises are made and confirmed to us: as when God had made a promise to Abraham, it is said, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Not that we can believe, and not do the works of God, as I have already shewn; but because when we have done all we can, our works are so imperfect, that we cannot be accounted righteous for them; and therefore God is graciously pleased to accept of our faith in His promises, and in His Son, in whom they are made; and to count that for righteousness to us, in that we are thereby interested in all the merits of our Blessed Saviour, in whom we believe, and by whom we are therefore justified before God. So effectually do the promises of God work in them who believe and trust on them, that they are thereby both made and accounted righteous, and so "are meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light."

Heb. 13. 5, 6.

Rom. 4. 3.

[Col. 1. 12.]

Neither doth the historical part of the Holy Scriptures want its influence and energy in those who receive it as attested by God Himself, and accordingly believe it. When

we read there, how God made the world, and what great things He hath since done in it; if we really believe it, we must needs be struck with such an admiration of His infinite wisdom and power, as will make us fall down and worship Him: when we read or hear of the dreadful judgments which He hath inflicted upon obstinate sinners; if we really believe it, we cannot but dread the thoughts of falling under His displeasure, and so live in fear all our life long: when we read or hear of the great deliverances He hath wrought and "the wonderful works that He hath done" for His faithful people and servants in all ages; if we really believe it, we shall be thereby inflamed with holy desires to be in the number of His faithful servants, and encouraged to trust on Him, and to hope that He will do as much for us, if there be occasion. When we read or hear of the great sins which the best of men have sometimes fallen into; if we really believe it, our hearts must needs be touched with the conscience of our own infirmities, and of the necessity of observing what the Apostle hath taught us in that case: "Be not high-minded, but fear." [Rom. 11. 20.] When we read or hear of the great troubles and afflictions which God's own people have met with in this world; if we really believe it, we shall the more cheerfully undergo whatsoever He shall be pleased to lay upon us, and with "Moses choose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." [Heb. 11. 25.] When we read or hear of the virtues and good works, for which the Saints of old are commended by God Himself, as, that Enoch "walked with God;" [Gen. 5. 24.] that Noah was "a just man, and perfect in his generation;" [Gen. 6. 9.] that Abraham was "strong in faith," giving glory unto God; [Rom. 4. 20.] that Job was not only patient, but thankful for all his troubles; [Job. 1. 21.] that Moses was "the meekest man upon earth;" [Numb. 12. 3.] that David was "a man after God's own heart;" [Acts 13. 22.] that Zacharias and Elizabeth were "both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless," [Luke 1. 5.] and the like: if we really believe it, what an emulation will it raise in us to come as near them as possibly we can? Especially the life and death of our Blessed Saviour, who "did none," and yet "suffered all manner of evil;" if we really believe it, it would not only make us ashamed of

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our former sins, but careful for the future to walk in His steps.

But as to what is recorded concerning our Blessed Saviour, I shall have occasion to speak more particularly of that afterwards; as likewise of the Prophecies or Predictions that are not yet fulfilled. Wherefore, passing by those which are fulfilled already, and so are a great confirmation of our faith in God's Word, I shall haste to the last of these heads, to which I said whatsoever is contained in it may be referred, which I call Affirmations: by which I mean, whatsoever is affirmed in the Holy Scriptures concerning God the Father, the Son, or the Holy Ghost, or any other truth that is there revealed, on purpose that we might believe it. For whatsoever is so affirmed, if we accordingly "believe it," it will "work so effectually" in us, as to cleanse our hearts from all erroneous and corrupt opinions, and fill them with a due sense and right notions of Divine things, according to that
Acts 15. 9. of St. Peter, where he saith, that "God purified their hearts by faith."

IV. To make this as plain and practical as I can, that ye may not only understand, but experience in yourselves what power this part of God's Holy Word hath upon them who believe, I shall briefly run through the Articles of our Christian faith, as they are contained in the Apostles' Creed, and shew how every one hath its particular influence, and all work together to cleanse and purify the hearts of those who believe, to take them off from all gross and sensible objects, and to fix them upon God and the concerns of another life. I know there are other great truths revealed in the Holy Scriptures, which are not expressly named in that Creed: but I shall only instance in those that are there expressed, because that is the Creed which I suppose you can all say, you all profess to believe it, and it is that which we repeat every day in our public devotions. And therefore it will be of great use to understand how you ought to be, and how you will be affected with every Article that is in it, if you actually believe it, whensoever ye hear or say it: and by consequence, how proper it is to repeat and exercise our
Heb. 11. 6. faith upon that Creed in our daily prayers.

First therefore, "He that cometh unto God, must believe

that He is." And accordingly our Creed begins with, "I believe in God the Father Almighty: in God," the Lord, the Lord of Hosts, Jehovah, Jah, Being, glory, goodness, purity, excellency, super-excellency, perfection itself, existing in and of Himself, "God blessed for ever." And who can believe there is such a glorious, amiable, infinite, incomprehensible, eternal Being, and not love and honour Him? Who can believe in Him, and not adore and serve Him with "reverence and godly fear?" It is impossible. Such a belief of God would raise up our hearts, and incline all the powers of our souls to Him, and fix them so firmly upon Him, that nothing would be able to withdraw them from Him. And if we believe in God the Father, we must needs believe He hath a Son, eternally begotten of Him, otherwise He could not be the Father; which by consequence must needs "work so effectually" in us, as to confirm and settle us in the belief of the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour, and of the most glorious Trinity, the foundation of our whole religion, and of all our hopes and expectations from it. But if we believe also that this God the Father is Almighty, that He can do whatsoever He pleaseth, whensoever, wheresoever, and howsoever He pleaseth to do it, that nothing can resist His will, all things being infinitely below Him, and entirely subject to Him: who can imagine, but they who feel it, what impressions such a faith would make upon our hearts? It would cut us to the quick with fear of offending, and desires of pleasing God Almighty above all things in the world, as believing that nothing can do us either good or hurt, but just as He pleaseth: especially if we go on to believe, that this "God the Father Almighty, is the Maker of Heaven and earth;" that He made the sun, the moon, and all the planets and fixed stars, with every thing that is in them, upon them, about them, above them, or beyond them, farther than our very thoughts can reach; that He made the Heaven of Heavens, with all the Angels, Archangels, Cherubim and Seraphim, and all the pure and spotless, glorious and most perfect creatures that reside there; that He made the earth and the sea, with all things that are therein: and that He did not only thus make all things at first, but He is still, He is always the maker of them, continually

[Rom. 1. 25.]

[Heb. 12. 28.]

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upholding them in their being, ordering, and disposing, and governing them, as He Himself sees good. Who can believe this, and not admire the glory of that infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness, that shineth forth in the whole creation? Who can believe this, and not cry out, "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are and were created." "Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to Him." "For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen." And as we "believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth," so also "in Jesus Christ His only Son our Lord:" that He is Jesus, that is, as the name imports, "the Saviour," the only Saviour we have in all the world; that this Jesus is the Christ, the anointed of God, to be a Priest, a Prophet, and a King, in order to His accomplishing our Salvation: that this Jesus Christ is the only Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, of the same nature and substance with Him; and that He is the Lord of the whole world, and in a particular manner our Lord and Governor. Could we live with a constant belief of all this, how happy should we then be? Then we should put our whole trust and confidence in Jesus, and in Him alone, for all things necessary for our Salvation; then we should apply ourselves to Christ upon all occasions, as our "Priest, to make atonement for us; as our Prophet, to instruct us;" and "as our King, to defend and govern us." Then the only Son of God would be our only joy and comfort; so that our "souls would" always "magnify the Lord, and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour." Then we should submit unto the will of Christ our Lord, and strive above all things to serve, and please, and obey Him, and so should always live under His conduct and protection.

Rev. 4. 11.

Rev. 19. 6, 7.

Rom. 11. 36.

[Luke 1. 46, 47.]

"Who," as it follows in the Creed, "was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary;" that is, who "being in the form of God, took upon Him the form of a servant," or became man too, by being conceived, not in the ordinary way as other men are, but by the Holy Ghost Himself, and born as miraculously of a pure virgin, the Virgin Mary, of

[Phil. 2. 6, 7.]

the stock of David; so that both His conception and birth were supernatural and miraculous, as being effected by the immediate power of God Himself. Which is such an Article of our faith, that if firmly believed, it would make us astonished at the infinite love of God to mankind, that He Himself should become man, and for that purpose alter the whole course of natural causes, which He hath settled in the world, and all to reconcile Himself to mankind, and mankind unto Himself. Who can believe this, and not love that God who so loved us, as to be conceived by His own Holy Spirit, and born of a virgin, and all to redeem and save us?

But how did this wonderful person, this God-man, redeem and save us? That we are taught in the next words of the Creed, "He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried, He descended into Hell." He suffered all the punishments which the law of God had threatened against the sins of men. He suffered shame and reproach in His glorious name; He suffered pain and anguish in His body; He suffered grief and sorrow in His soul. This He suffered under Pontius Pilate, a Roman governor, and therefore suffered also that cruel and accursed death which the Romans inflicted upon notorious malefactors: He was crucified, His hands and feet were nailed to a cross, and there He hung till He gave up the ghost and died, and so offered up Himself as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the whole world; and being dead, His body was buried, or laid in the grave, and His soul went down to Hell, not to suffer there, but to shew that He had suffered enough already, and that the gates of Hell could have no more power over Him or His. For He had now overcome the Devil, and therefore triumphed over Him in His own kingdom.

Is it possible really to believe all this, and yet not be affected with it? To believe that the only-begotten Son of God suffered so much for our sins, and yet continue in them? To believe that He was crucified for us, and yet we not "crucify our flesh with the affections and lusts?" To believe [Gal. 5. 24.] that He died in our stead, and yet not live to His honour and glory? To believe that He was buried, and yet we

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not be "buried with Him by Baptism into death?" To
Rom. 6. 4. believe that He went down into Hell, and yet that we should walk in the ways that lead thither? That He hath overcome the Devil, and yet we should be overcome by him? It is impossible! Men may talk of what Christ suffered, and profess to "believe" it, and yet be never the better for it: but if they did what they profess, if they really believed that such an extraordinary person suffered in such an extraordinary manner for sin, yea, and for their
[2 Cor. 7. 10.] sins too, it must needs work in them "true repentance, not to be repented of;" so as to make them not only ashamed of their former sins, and heartily sorry for them, but steadfastly resolved to walk for the future in newness of life. They would never think they can do enough for Him, who hath done and suffered so much for them.

Ps. 16. 10; Acts 2. 31. But what saith our Blessed Lord in David? 'Thou wilt not leave my soul in Hell, neither wilt Thou suffer Thine holy one to see corruption." And accordingly, though He was "crucified, dead and buried," and "went down into Hell," yet, as it follows in the Creed, "the third day He rose again from the dead, ascended into Heaven, sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." We heard before how low Christ humbled Himself for us, and here we see how highly He is now exalted by the Father, and all for us too: the third day after His soul and body were separated upon the cross, they were united together again, and so He revived or rose again to life, and soon after went up in both so united into Heaven, and was there
1 Pet. 3. 22. set "at the right hand of God, Angels, and Authorities, and Powers being made subject to Him." Neither was He only thus set at the right hand of God, at His first going into Heaven, but, as it is in the Creed, He sitteth there now, as
Eph. 1. 22. "head over all things to the Church," as King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, vested with absolute authority over the whole creation, and as the true High-Priest, appearing in the presence of God, making atonement and reconciliation for all that believe in Him, by virtue of that blood which He shed for the sins of the whole world, when He was upon earth. And that seems to be the reason why, in the Revela-

tions, He is all along represented as a Lamb sitting upon His throne, because He sits there as the Lamb that offered up Himself for the sins of the world, and by virtue of that "one oblation of Himself once offered," He is continually propitiating or reconciling His Father, and so interceding with Him for all His faithful people, that their sins may be pardoned, and their persons accepted of, or accounted righteous before God. This He always did, is still doing at this very moment, and so will be to the end of the world; when He will come to earth again, and summon all mankind that ever lived, together with those which shall be then alive, to appear before Him, and will pass His final sentence upon every one, "according to that he hath done in the body, whether it be good or evil." 2 Cor. 5. 10.

I hope I need not tell you, that if ye "believed" all this, it would "work effectually" in you, you could not surely but feel it in yourselves: for I speak to them who believe, did not your hearts even burn within you, while you heard what a glorious Saviour ye have in Heaven? Do not your souls leap for joy, that ye have such an advocate "ever living to make intercession" for you? Do not you still find yourselves refreshed and cheered at the hearing, that He who loved you so well as to lay down His life for you, is now "at the right hand of God," and hath all things in Heaven and earth entirely at His command? Hath it not made you ready to praise and magnify His name, and to join with the choir of Heaven in singing, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." And when you heard that this glorious person will come one day to judge all mankind, and you among the rest, did not this stir up in you good desires and holy resolutions to prepare yourselves for that great account you must then give to Him? If you found no such effect in yourselves upon the hearing of these fundamental Articles of our religion, you may conclude that you do not believe them: for if you did, you would not only have felt all that I have said, but far more than I am able to express. [Heb. 7. 25.] Rev. 5. 13.

The same may be said of all the other Articles which remain. If you believed "in the Holy Ghost, the Lord"

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and "the Giver of life," and of all grace and holiness, you could never hear of Him, but you would immediately lift up your hearts to Him, to be quickened, and sanctified, or made holy by Him. If you believed "the Holy Catholic Church," or the congregation of all Christian people, without which there
Acts 2. 47. is no Salvation, according to that of the Apostle, "The Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved;" if you believed this, I say, you could never hear of Christ's Church, but it would fill your hearts with joy and thankfulness to God, that you are admitted into it, and strengthen your resolutions of living so as that you may be saved in it. If you believed "the Communion of Saints," that there is a society or company of persons in the world, which God is pleased to account real Saints, His own faithful servants, His elect and peculiar people, which He hath a special love for, and takes particular care of, both in this world and the next; did you believe this, whensoever you hear of it, it would put you upon longing and striving all ye can to be in the number
Eph. 2. 19. of those blessed souls, "Fellow-citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God," and so "meet to be partakers of
Col. 1. 12. the inheritance of the Saints in light."

If you believed "the forgiveness of sins," that upon your repentance and conversion unto God, your sins will be all pardoned by the blood of Christ; every time you hear of it, it would "work" more and more upon you, to turn you
Acts 26. 18. "from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that ye may receive this forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith, that is in Christ Jesus."

If you believed "the resurrection of the body," that although your bodies must return to the earth, out of which they were taken, yet they shall be raised up again to stand before Christ's tribunal, whensoever you hear of it, it would make you more careful to live in your bodies, so as that ye may not be afraid either to lay them down, or take them up again.

And as for "life everlasting," if you really believed that
Matt. 25. 46. "the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal," what a mighty change would it make in you, whensoever you hear of it? It would make

you dread the thoughts of continuing in a state of wickedness, and resolve for the future to devote yourselves wholly to the service of Almighty God, that when you go out of this wicked and naughty world, you may live with Christ and His holy Angels in perfect glory and happiness for ever.

Thus "effectually" do the plain Articles of our religion "work" upon them that "believe;" and so doth the whole Word of God: as I doubt not but many here present have found by their own experience, who when they have heard any part of it revealed to them, upon their "believing" and "receiving" it, "as it is in truth the word of God," they have felt it to be, as the Apostle saith, "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." It comes upon them like fire upon tinder, or such combustible matter, where it immediately catcheth, and spreadeth itself all over it. Whereas, upon those who do "not believe," it falls like a spark into water; it is no sooner there, but it is out. And that is the great reason why so many hear the Word of God, and yet are never the better for it: because, whatsoever they may profess, they are not fully persuaded of it, they do not really believe it, with such a faith as is due to the infallible Word and testimony of God Himself; no, not so much as they believe what they see or hear, or is told them by fallible men. And then it is no wonder that it makes no impression upon them: it is impossible it should, both from the nature of the thing itself, and from the just judgment of God upon them, for not believing what He Himself hath said. Heb. 4. 12.

But let others do what they please, let us do what we profess; even believe whatsoever God hath revealed to us in His holy Word; that whensoever we hear, or so much as think of it, His grace may set it home upon our hearts, and make it "work effectually" in us; that it may be always "profitable" to us "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that we may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works." And for that purpose, let us be always thinking of God's Word, and 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.

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ruminate by faith so long upon it, that it may be digested into proper food and nourishment for our souls, that we may "grow thereby in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." That whilst others live only by sense, or fancy, or at the best by corrupt and carnal reason, so as to be moved and acted only by them in every thing they do, we may for the future live by the faith of the Son of God, and with a constant belief of those great truths which He hath revealed to us, as the great principle of our life and actions.

2 Pet. 3. 18.

What holy and heavenly lives should we then live? Then we should repent of all our sins, because it is written in God's Word, that "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Then we should take care of every thing we do, because it is written, "God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Then we should refrain, not only from profane, but idle talk, because it is written, that "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Then we should be humble and lowly in our own eyes, because it is written, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Then we should strive all we can to walk in all the Commandments of the Lord blameless, because it is written, "He that hath My Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me; and he that loveth Me, shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself unto him." Then we should love the world no longer, because it is written, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Then we should never "forsake the assembling ourselves together," but should take all opportunities of joining in the public worship of God, because it is written, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Then we should not be cast down at any chastisement or afflictions that God is pleased to lay upon us, because it is written, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." Then we should never despair of God's mercy in the pardon of our sins, because it is written, "If any man sin, we have an ad-

Luke 13. 3. 5.

Eccles. 12. 14.

Matt. 12. 36.

1 Pet. 5. 5.

John 14. 21.

1 John 2. 15.

[Heb. 10. 25.]

Matt. 18. 20.

Heb. 12. 6.

1 John 2. 1, 2.

vocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins." Then we should press towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, because it is written, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." [Phil. 3. 14.] Rev. 3. 21.

Yet, could we always live with a firm belief of what is written in God's Holy Word, we should live in the other world, while we are in this; "our conversations would be always in Heaven," our thoughts and affections would be still running upon Almighty God as present with us, or upon our Saviour as interceding for us, or upon the work that He hath set us, or upon the account that we must give Him of it, or upon the reward that He hath promised to those who do it faithfully, or upon something or other which we find there written; and so should steer an even course through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, till we come to the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, through Jesus Christ our only Saviour, "to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever." Amen. [Phil.3.20.]

Now these things being thus plainly laid down before you, give me leave to deal freely with you concerning what you have now heard; for it concerns you all very much, infinitely more than any thing in this world can do. You cannot surely but know, that "without faith it is impossible to please God," that your sins can never be pardoned, nor your souls ever saved without it. Now by what you have now heard, you may easily perceive whether you have true faith or no, whether you believe the Gospel, as you are there required, to the saving of your souls. For if the word preached makes no impression upon you; if you hear sermon after sermon, as many do, to our shame be it spoken, and yet be never the wiser nor better for it; if you be not "doers of the Word, but hearers only, deceiving your own souls:" you may then conclude, that notwithstanding your profession of the Gospel, you do not believe it. You believe it no more than they who do not so much as profess it; and therefore are as yet in the same deplorable condition with them, even in the "gall of bitterness, and in the bond of [Heb. 5. 6.] [James 1. 22.] [Acts 8. 23.]

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iniquity." But if "the Word preached work effectually" in you; if it stirs up your hearts, and strengthens your resolutions to obey it; if it puts you upon constant and sincere endeavours to live according as you are there taught, you have then good ground to believe, that you do really believe it, and shall as certainly obtain what is there promised, as you sincerely perform what is commanded in it.

Wherefore, in the name of Christ our Saviour, I beseech you all not to satisfy yourselves any longer with the bare hearing of God's Word; but whensoever you hear it read or preached to you, "receive it as it is in truth the Word of God," and act your faith accordingly upon it, that so it may "work effectually" in you, both while you hear it, and whensoever you call it to mind again. As for example, you have lately heard, how you ought to worship and glorify God, and how to serve Him daily, in His house of Prayer, and often at His holy table; these things have been plainly delivered to you out of God's own Word.

Now, though you have hitherto seemed not to regard God's Holy Word, nor so much as to believe it to be His Word, in that you have not done it; yet now that you are put in mind of it again, "shew your faith by your works," manifest to the world, and to your own consciences, that you believe God's Word, by your constant performing the foresaid duties, and whatsoever else you hear to be there required of you. And whensoever you have the Gospel preached to you, do but receive it with faith, and you cannot but receive benefit and comfort from it: then every sermon you hear will do you good, and you will have cause to thank God for it; and so shall we also who preach God's Word unto you: for then we may truly say to you, as the Apostle here saith to the Thessalonians; "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

[James 2. 18.]

SERMON XI.

MINISTERS OF THE GOSPEL, CHRIST'S AMBASSADORS.

2 Cor. v. 20.

Now then we are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.

We live in an age, and among a people that place a great part if not the whole of their religion in hearing sermons; and yet we find but few that are ever the more religious for all they hear, most contenting themselves with coming to Church, and continuing, or perhaps sitting down there all the while that the prayers are read, and a sermon preached, and then going home again, without ever concerning themselves any further about what they have heard, nor so much as thinking of it any more: and then it is no wonder that they are never the wiser, nor the better for it. But it may justly seem a great wonder, how it comes to pass, that the Word of God, which of itself "is sharper than any two-edged [Heb.4.12.] sword," should, notwithstanding, make so little impression upon those who hear it: but though they hear it over and over again, they are never "pricked in their hearts," as St. [Acts 2.37.] Peter's hearers were, nor any way touched or affected with it; but still continue just as they were, careless and unconcerned about their future state, and every thing relating to it, how plainly, how powerfully soever it is pressed upon them.

This may justly seem strange to one that considers, how commonly "the Word" of God is preached among us, both in the city and country: but several reasons may be assigned for it; one of the chief is, that men in hearing the Word preached, usually look no further than to him who

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preacheth it; taking what he saith to them as coming only from him their fellow-creature, a man of like passions with themselves; and therefore regard it no more than what is said by any other man: whereas if they really believed and considered, that the Word they hear, is the Word of God Himself; and that he who preacheth it, preacheth not in his own name, but God's, and accordingly received it as the Thessalonians did, "not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which effectually worketh in them that believe," they would soon find it "working effectually" also upon them: it would then come with that power and force upon them, that it would "cut them to the heart," and make them cry out as St. Peter's hearers did, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

1 Thess. 2. 13.

Acts 2. 37.

This therefore is that which St. Paul, in my text, puts the Corinthians in mind of; and the better to prepare them for it, he first acquaints them in the foregoing verses, that God hath reconciled "Mankind to Himself by Jesus Christ," and that He hath committed the Word and ministry of this reconciliation to us, the Apostles and their successors in all ages; that we, in His name, and by His authority, might publish it to the world, and persuade men to accept of the peace which He now offers to them, so as to be reconciled to Him, as He is to them by Jesus Christ. And having said this, the Apostle draws this conclusion from it, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."

[v. 18.]

[v. 19.]

This is a truth so necessary for all Christians to know that it is the first thing that St. Paul put those he wrote to in mind of in all his Epistles (which he wrote as from himself only, without joining any other with him), beginning them with saying, "Paul the Apostle of Jesus Christ," or "Paul called to be an Apostle," or the like; that they to whom he wrote might know, that he did not write to them as a private person, but as an Apostle of Jesus Christ, that is, as the word signifies, a legate or messenger of Christ, sent and empowered by Him to write: that so they might receive what he was about to write to them, not as coming from him, but from Christ Himself; an Apostle being in effect the same

with an Ambassador. But foreseeing that this name would in process of time be appropriated only to the twelve, and such as were called immediately by Christ Himself, as he and some others were; therefore in my text, speaking not only of these, but of such also as should succeed them in any part of their Apostolical office in all ages, he alters the phrase, not saying, we are Apostles, but we are Ambassadors for Christ. A word that is commonly known to signify such as are sent by a prince to a foreign country, to treat in his name about matters of state, as particularly about peace and war. And so Christ Himself useth the word, where, speaking of a king going to make war with another king, He saith, that "he sits down first, and consults whether he be able to meet him or no: or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sendeth an embassage, and desireth conditions of peace." So here, although Almighty God can meet with us when He pleaseth, and we are no way able to withstand Him; yet howsoever, He is graciously pleased to send some men to treat with others in His name about peace with Him, to acquaint them with the easy conditions that He hath made and expects from them, and to assure them, that upon their performance of the said conditions, he will be reconciled to them, and at "peace" with them. And therefore all who are thus sent or commissioned by Him, to act in His name, are properly called Ambassadors, and, as the Apostle here saith, "Ambassadors for Christ," or in the place and stead of Christ. As it was He that procured this peace for mankind, so He is the chief manager of all things relating to it; therefore called, "the Angel;" or, as we translate it, "the Messenger of the Covenant." Because He was sanctified and sent by the Father "to publish and declare it to the world," and did it so faithfully, that before He went out of the world, He could truly say unto the Father, "I have manifested Thy Name unto the men which Thou gavest Me out of the world, —— I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest Me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me." Where we may likewise observe, that like a wise and faithful "Ambassador," He kept strictly to the instructions, and

Luke 14. 32.

Mal. 3. 1.

John 6. 57; 8. 29; 10. 36.

John 17. 6, 8.

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to the very words which the Father had given Him: in whose Name He professeth that He came, and spake, and acted all along while He was upon earth.

John 5. 43; 8. 38; 10. 25.

Wherefore Jesus Christ being the Mediator between God and men, and as such having "all power given Him in Heaven and earth," for the transacting the great business of reconciliation between them; when He was about to leave the earth, as man, and go up to Heaven, to reside there as our Advocate with the Father, He delegated some men to supply His place upon earth, and to carry on the great work which He had begun amongst men: these He called His Apostles or Ambassadors, because they were sent by Him, and empowered to act in His Name and stead, and according to the instructions that He gave them. Which, that the world in all ages might be fully assured of, He ordered the commission which He granted them to be recorded, where it is written, that the same day on which He rose from the dead, in the evening, He came to them where they were assembled, and when He had convinced them that He was the same person that had been crucified three days before, by shewing them His hands and feet that were nailed to the cross, He then said unto them again, "Peace be unto you. As My Father hath sent Me, even so send I you. And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

[Matt. 28. 18.]

John 20.

Ver. 21-23.

Where we may observe, that He sent them after the very same manner as the Father had sent Him. "As My Father," saith He, "sent Me, even so send I you." And therefore as the Father had sent Him by anointing Him "with the Holy Ghost," for the office He was to perform, which was signified by the "Spirit descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him," when He was baptized, and so inaugurated into the said office: even so He sent His Apostles; for "He breathed on them," and saith, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost;" the Holy Ghost proceeding from Him, as it doth from the Father. When Christ breathed upon His Apostles, He thereby "anointed them with the Holy Ghost, and with power," to execute the office which He now committed to

Isa. 61. 1; Luke 4. 18; Acts 10. 38.

[Matt. 3. 16.]

[Acts 10. 38.]

them. And that they might know, that this was designed not only for them, but for all that should succeed them in the said office to the end of the world, when He afterwards gave them His instructions for the execution of it, He said to them, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28. 20. From whence the Apostles clearly understanding that their office was to continue to the end of the world, they took care to confer it upon others, by laying their hands upon them, and so transferring to them of the same Spirit which they had received from Christ, the same way that Moses had done it by God's own appointment to Joshua. Numb. 27. 18-23. And therefore such upon whom they laid their hands, are said to be sent by the Holy Ghost, particularly Paul and Barnabas. Acts 13. 4. And the same St. Paul tells the elders of Ephesus, upon whom he had laid his hands, that the Holy Ghost had made them Bishops or Overseers, and put Timothy in mind of the gift of God which was in him by the laying on of "his hands." Acts 20. 28. Thus the Holy Ghost, which the Apostles received immediately from Christ Himself, hath been handed down from them to others, and so to others successively to this day, and will be to the end of the world. 2 Tim. 1. 6. And all such on whom they who regularly succeed the Apostles in their whole office, lay their hands with an intention to confer the Holy Ghost, as in the Ordination of Priests among us; they also receive such a measure of it, whereby they are qualified and commissioned to act in Christ's name and stead, in the administration of the Word and Sacraments, as the Apostles themselves did; and therefore are properly Ambassadors for Christ, as they were: and Christ is as really with them, as He was with His first Apostles, in the execution of their office in all ages, according to the promise He made them, of being "with them alway, even unto the end of the world."

It was necessary to make this as plain as I could in few words, that ye may understand how we came to be Ambassadors for Christ, as the Apostle here speaks, so as to act in His name, and by His commission, without which nothing we do can signify any thing. Any man may read the Scriptures, or make an oration to the people, but it is not that which the Scriptures call "preaching the Word" of

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God, unless he be sent by God to do it. "For how shall they preach except they be sent?" A butcher might kill an ox or a lamb, as well as the High Priest; but it was no sacrifice to God, unless one of His Priests did it. "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron." Any man may treat of public affairs as well as an ambassador; but he cannot do it to any purpose, without a commission from his prince. As suppose a foreign nation should set up one among themselves to make a league with England, what would that signify, when he is not authorized by the king to do it? And yet this is the case of many among us, who, as the Apostle foretold, cannot "endure sound doctrine, but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." But such teachers as men thus heap to themselves, howsoever they may tickle their itching ears, they can never touch their hearts: for that can be done only by the power of God, accompanying and assisting His own institution and commission. Insomuch that if I did not think, or rather was not fully assured, that I had such a commission to be an Ambassador for Christ, and to act in His name, I should never think it worth the while to preach or execute any ministerial Office. For I am sure, that all I did would be null and void of itself, according to God's ordinary way of working; and we have no ground to expect miracles. But blessed be God, we in our Church, by a successive imposition of hands, continued all along from the Apostles themselves, receive the same Spirit that was conferred upon them for the administration of the Word and Sacraments ordained by our Lord and Master, and therefore may do it as effectually to the salvation of mankind as they did. For as they were, so are we, "Ambassadors for Christ."

Rom. 10. 15.

Heb. 5. 4.

2 Tim. 4. 3.

"As though God did beseech you by us," or, as the words may be rendered, As if God did call upon you by us; by us, as He did by Christ, whose Ambassadors we are, and proxies in things pertaining unto God. So that "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." He still continues to speak by those whom His Son hath sent to speak in His name. As

Heb. 1. 1, 2.

the Son Himself said to His Apostles, and in them to all that should regularly succeed them; "It is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you." Whatsoever we speak according to the instructions which Christ our Master hath given us, "it is in truth the Word of God." It is God that speaketh by us; according to that of David, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue." For we speaking only what Christ our Lord spake before us, and speaking it only in His name and by His authority, as what He spake was the Word of God, so is that which we speak too: for we speak, or, as it were, repeat it only after Him, as His ambassadors, sent by Him to speak it in His place and stead.

Matt. 10. 20.

1 Thes. 2. 13.

2 Sam. 23. 2.

And therefore, it follows in the text, "we pray you in Christ's stead;" as if Christ Himself was here present. For He being now, as to His body, in Heaven, He sends His Ministers or Ambassadors to represent Him, and supply His place upon earth, and to do in His name what He Himself did when He was here, and would still do if He was now present in body, as He is by His Spirit and power; according to the foresaid promise, which He made to His Apostles and Ambassadors in all ages, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world:" and according to what He told them upon another occasion, saying, "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me; and he that despiseth Me, despiseth Him that sent Me." Whereby He plainly signified what He afterwards told them in express terms, that as "the Father sent" Him, so "He sent them," as His Ambassadors, to treat in His name; and that as the persons of ambassadors are always reckoned sacred and inviolable, so what an ambassador doth in the name of his prince, is looked upon as done by the prince himself; and as an affront offered to an ambassador reflects on the prince that sent him, so whatsoever is done to the Ministers or Ambassadors of Christ as such, is done to Christ Himself. They who "hear them, hear Him;" and they who "despise them, despise Him;" as they who "despise Him," whom the Father sent, "despise the Father" who sent Him.

Luke 10. 16.

From hence therefore ye may see, how truly the Apostle

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here saith, "We pray you in Christ's stead;" and how necessary it is for you to hearken to what we say in His name, lest ye be found in the number of those who despise Christ, together with the doctrine that He teacheth, and the advice that He gives you by us; for it is "in His stead" we pray you. But what do "we pray you in His stead" to do? Nothing but what is really for your good; nothing but what tends to your eternal happiness and welfare; and therefore nothing but what it is your interest to do, whether we prayed you to do it or no. For seeing Christ came into the world for no other end, but to make you happy, and hath done and suffered so much as He hath for that only purpose; ye cannot imagine, that He by us, or we from Him, should pray you to do any thing but what is indispensably necessary in order to your attainment of true felicity. And although we do not command, but only "pray you in Christ's stead," yet it being in His stead we pray, ye ought to give the same deference to it, as if we commanded you. The request of an earthly prince is taken by his faithful subjects as a command: how much more when the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, is pleased to condescend so far as to make a request to you? That surely is to be received as the highest sort of commanding, in that it doth not only signify His will, but also lays a fresh obligation upon you to observe it, seeing He is graciously pleased to deal so gently and kindly with you, in such a way as that your obedience to Him may be your own voluntary act; not being forced into it only by His peremptory command, but drawn with the bands of love.

Love indeed! the highest that can be shewn you. For after all, what is it that we thus pray you in Christ's stead? nothing else but to be reconciled to God: "we pray you," said the Apostle, "in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." One would think there was no great need that such a request should be made to you, much less that it should be made in no less a name than His that made and governs the world. For, who would not of his own accord be reconciled to God, if he might? If men would but consult their own real interest, this certainly would be the first thing they would all strive after. And yet God knows

there are but few that do it: and therefore, out of His infinite love and mercy, He is pleased to send His Ambassadors one after another, "rising up early," and sending them to call upon men, and to pray them in His name to do it. And He hath sent me this day to make the same request and prayer to you, even that ye would be reconciled to Him. [Jer. 7. 25.]

But that ye may fully understand what it is that "I pray you" in Christ's stead to do, and likewise how ye may do it aright, ye must take notice, that "by nature" ye are all "the children of wrath," one as well as another. For He that made you is angry with you, for not answering His end in making you, which was to serve and glorify Him, in obeying and observing the laws which He for that purpose hath set you. Whereas ye have all broken His said laws, and so instead of glorifying, ye have dishonoured Him through the whole course of your lives, and therefore are justly fallen under His displeasure: but He, notwithstanding, hath been graciously pleased to find out, and put you into a way of being reconciled to Him; not by suffering your sins to go unpunished, but by not imputing them to you, but laying the punishments which were due unto you for them, upon another, even upon His only-begotten Son, as the Apostle here acquaints us from Him, saying, "For He hath made Him who knew no sin, to be sin for us," or an offering for our sins; that is, as the Prophet expresseth it, "He hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." And His only-begotten Son having thus borne the punishments which His justice required for our sins, He is now ready to extend His mercy to us, and to receive us again into His favour, upon such easy terms and conditions, that it is our own fault, unless we perform them, so as to be reconciled again to God. Ephes. 2. 3. [2 Cor. 5. 21.] Isa. 53. 6.

For all that is required on your parts, is only to "repent and believe the Gospel." This was all that our Lord Himself called upon mankind to do, when He first entered upon His ministry, and the substance of all that He taught afterwards, and commanded His Apostles to teach. He Himself saith, that "He came to call sinners to repentance," and told His disciples, "That repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations." First Mark 1. 15. Luke 5. 32. Luke 24. 47.

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"repentance," and then "remission of sins," but both in His name; and among all nations, that all might believe in Him for it. And accordingly when the people desired to know of St. Peter and the rest of the Apostles, what they should do, St. Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins." They must not only repent, so as to forsake their former superstitions and vices of all sorts, but they must also believe in Jesus Christ, so as to be baptized in His name, and become His disciples indeed, believing and practising all that He hath taught them, before they could be reconciled to God, so as to have their sins pardoned. This is that which Christ Himself also gave in charge to His Apostles, at the same time that He sent them out as His Ambassadors into the world: "Go ye," saith He, "and teach," or rather "make all nations disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." These are the instructions which He gave them and their successors, together with their commission to be His Ambassadors to the end of the world. He requires them to go and call upon "all nations" to become His disciples, and to make them so by "baptizing them" according to His institution, "in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:" and then "to teach them to observe" not only some, but "all things whatsoever He hath commanded," whether with His own mouth, or else by His Prophets, Apostles, or other holy men of God, who "spake as they were moved by His Holy Spirit."

Acts 2. 38.

Matt. 28. 19, 20.

[2 Pet. 1. 21.]

These therefore, being the orders and instructions which Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour of mankind, hath given to all whom He sends or employs as His Ambassadors upon earth, in His name and in His stead I pray and beseech all here present, to come up to the terms which He hath made for your reconciliation to God: repent, repent of all your former sins; you cannot but all know, every one, the sins that he hath hitherto been guilty of, and is still addicted to. If ye do but look into your own hearts and lives, you cannot but see, how little good, and how much evil you have done,

since ye came into the world. You cannot but be conscious to yourselves, that you have often transgressed the laws and commandments of Almighty God who sent you hither, by doing what ye ought not to do, and by not doing what ye ought; and so have broken also that solemn vow and promise which ye made to God, when ye were baptized and made the members and disciples of Jesus, and are still apt to do so one way or other every day.

Now, therefore, I pray you in Christ's stead break off your sins, all your sins, by repentance and amendment of life. "Let not sin reign any longer in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof;" but mortify the deeds of the body, and destroy the ill habits ye have contracted by a long continuance in any sort of vice or wickedness: set yourselves in good earnest upon "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." Take heed that your hearts be never over-charged with "surfeiting" and "drunkenness," or the "cares of this life:" be just and righteous in all your dealings, and if ye have wronged any man, be sure to make him restitution. "As ye have opportunity, do good unto all men, especially to them who are of the household of faith;" "and whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye unto them." "Love the Lord your God with all your hearts, and with all your souls;" "Pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks unto Him:" "Sanctify His holy name, and make Him your only fear and dread." Live with a constant dependance upon His Word, and submission to His will; acknowledge Him in all your ways, honour Him with all your substance, "serve and worship Him with reverence and godly fear:" let your hearts be always running after Him, your spirits rejoicing in Him, and your whole souls be reconciled and inclined to Him, and to those holy ways that He hath prepared for you to walk in. Study all ye can to promote His glory, in your several places and stations in the world: and for that purpose, "cease to do evil, learn to do well, and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus:" believe on Him, as your only "Saviour, Mediator," and "Advocate" with the Father, "who ever liveth to make intercession for

[Rom. 6. 12; 8. 13.]
[Tit. 2. 12.]
[Luke 21. 24.]
[Gal. 6. 10.]
[Matt. 7. 12.]
[1 Thes. 5. 17, 18.]
[1 Pet. 3. 15.]
[Heb. 12. 28.]
[Isa. 1. 16. 17.]
[Col. 3. 17.]
[Heb. 7. 25.]

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those who come unto God by Him." And therefore as you thus truly repent of all your sins, and come unto God by Him, trust also and depend upon Him to make your peace with God; nothing doubting but that He will intercede so effectually for you, that for His sake, and upon the account of His merits and mediation for you, your sins being all pardoned, God will be reconciled to you, and you shall be reconciled to God, and restored to His love and favour again, as much as if ye had never offended Him in all your lives.

Having thus prayed you in Christ's stead, and for the most part in His very words, to be *reconciled* to God, it may seem needless to use any arguments to persuade you to it; for if ye will not hearken to what Christ Himself desires of you, much less will you regard any thing that I can say unto you. But in this also I shall not speak in my *own* name, but His; and in His "stead pray you" to consider, first, who it is that desires this of you; not I, your fellow-worm, but Christ Himself, Christ the Eternal Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, the Lord God Almighty: [Phil. 2. 6, 7, 8.] "Christ, who being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal to God;" and yet for your sakes "made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant: Christ, who being thus found in fashion as a man," really and truly man as well as God, "became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross;" and all to appease the wrath of God, and reconcile Him to you: Christ, who is [Eph. 1. 22.] now at the right hand of the Father, "and is made head over all things for the Church," that nothing may hinder their reconciliation to God, who apply themselves to Him, and do what He requires in order to it. This is that Christ, who requires you to do what ye have now heard; and will ye not do any thing ye can for Him, who hath done and suffered so much for you? For Him who loved you so as to lay down His own life for you? Surely you can never deny Him any thing, much less when He desires nothing of you, but only that ye would be reconciled to God. This is the only end of all He did for mankind upon earth, the end of all that He is now doing in Heaven, and the end of His sending *me* at this time to solicit and pray you in His stead to do it: and if ye still stand out, and refuse to come

in upon His most gracious advice and request; what favour can ye ever expect from Him? None, certainly; He will be so far from shewing you any kindness, so far from saving you from your sins, and from the wrath of God, that He hath told you beforehand what He will say to you: "Because I have called, and ye refused, I have stretched out My hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all My counsel, and would none of My reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh." [Prov. 1. 24, 25, 26.]

And your calamity will most certainly come ere long, whether ye fear it or no; greater calamity than ye are aware of, greater than ye can yet imagine. For consider, in the next place, that until ye are reconciled to God, as you are enemies to Him, so He is an enemy to you: He that made you is angry with you, He is incensed against you. And who can imagine the dismal effects and consequents of His displeasure? "If His wrath be kindled, yea, but a little," who is able to stand before it? The thoughts of it are sufficient to make the stoutest heart among us tremble: to have Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, the Supreme Governor of the World; to have Him angry with us, who can think of it without horror and amazement? Who then can describe the deplorable condition which they are in, that lie under His displeasure? For my part, I am so far from being able to give you a description, that I dread the very thoughts of it; only we know in general, that "it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God;" that all that He continues to be angry at, will most certainly do so, and by consequence be as miserable as it is possible for them to be: for so long as He who governs all things in the world is angry with you, there is nothing in it can do you good, nothing but what will contribute some way or other to your ruin and destruction. All things are cursed to you, those also which you think to be blessings: and all the judgments that God hath threatened in His Word against sinners, seeing He is angry with you, stand ready every moment to fall upon you. And if He should once open your eyes, to see Him frowning upon you, you would not be able to endure yourselves, but would wish with all your souls you could [Ps. 2. 12.] [Heb. 10. 31.]

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cease to be, or be any thing rather than what you are, "the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:" but all in vain. All the world cannot help you, unless He that made and governs it be reconciled to you; but ye must be punished "with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe in that day." When ye will be cast into Hell fire, "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."

[Rom. 9. 22.]

2 Thess. 1. 9, 10.

Mark 9. 44.

If these things were laid to your hearts as they ought to be, they would make you very restless and uneasy, until you have made your peace with God, and done all that ye have heard to be required in order to your reconciliation to Him. And how happy would you then be? As happy in the love and favour of God, as the other are miserable under His wrath and fury. For when you are at peace with God, all things else will be at peace with you; He that made them, will make them to be so: "You shall be in league with the stones of the field, and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with you." Yea, "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." And not only they, but all things else shall work together for your good, so long as ye continue in His favour, who governs and disposeth of all things as He pleaseth. For when ye are reconciled to Him, He will look upon you as His friends, His favourites, His children, and will deal accordingly with you. He will take you into His own particular care and conduct. He will "hide you under His wings," that "no evil may come near to hurt you." He will bless and sanctify all occurrences to you. He will provide all things necessary, that as you have nothing that is evil, so ye may want nothing that is good for you. He will cause "the light of His countenance to shine upon you," and manifest His special love and favour to you, that you may see Him smiling upon you, rejoicing over you, and delighting to do you good; in which blessed sight our happiness chiefly consisteth. He will guide you by His counsel, assist you by His grace, protect you by His power, enlighten, quicken, actuate, support, and strengthen you by His Holy Spirit, that you may pass through all "the

Job 5. 23.

Prov. 16. 7.

[Rom. 8. 28.]

[Ps. 91. 4, 10.]

[Ps. 4. 7.]

changes and chances of this mortal life," so as to come at last to live with Him and His Holy Angels, in the perfect vision and fruition of His eternal Godhead.

But what do I mean, to offer at describing the happiness of those who are "reconciled" to God? When to be in His favour is itself the greatest happiness that a creature is capable of, and such as none can apprehend but they who have it. Yet this is that happiness which the eternal Son of God hath purchased for mankind, and sends His Ambassadors about to invite them to it. It is in "His name" I come to all that are here present at this time, and "pray you in His stead, be ye all now reconciled unto God;" now, while ye may. Blessed be God, ye all may as yet be "reconciled" to Him, if ye will but take the course for it, which hath been now described to you out of His Holy Word: otherwise, He would not have sent me to call upon you, nor brought you hither to be called upon to do it; but if ye turn your backs, and refuse or neglect to hearken to Him now, ye know not whether He will ever call upon you any more. Wherefore I "pray you" again "in his stead," put off this great work no longer, but begin it now. "For why will ye die?" Why will ye destroy yourselves, when ye need not? Why will ye continue any longer under the displeasure of Almighty God, when ye may be restored to His favour, if ye will but seek it? But then you must seek it in His own way, in the constant use of the means which He hath appointed, whereby to obtain His grace and assistance to do what is required of you. What they are, ye all know: and therefore I need say no more. But as I have "now prayed you in Christ's stead," to be "reconciled" to God, so "in His name" I pray God to be "reconciled" to you, and to "open your eyes, that ye may see the things that belong to your everlasting peace, before they be hid from you."

[Ezek. 18. 31.]

[Luke 19. 42.]

SERMON XII.

THE SACERDOTAL BENEDICTION IN THE NAME OF THE TRINITY.

2 Cor. xiii. 14.

The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all.

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It would be great rashness in us, who know so little of our own, to enquire into the nature of Him that made us, any further than He Himself hath been pleased to make it known unto us in His Holy Word. But it would be the height of impudence and presumption, to offer at explaining the *incomprehensible* mystery of the most glorious Trinity; how three distinct persons subsist in the same individual nature, so as to be all one and the same God. It is sufficient for us to believe what is written, that there is but one living and true God; that "the Lord our God is one Jehovah, one Being, the Lord." That the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, these three are one Being, one Jehovah, one God: that the Father is of Himself, the Son of the Father, the Holy Ghost of the Father and the Son, and "yet none before or after other, none greater or less than another; but the whole three Persons co-eternal together, and co-equal." This we are bound to believe, because it is revealed by God Himself, and therefore revealed by Him, that we may believe it upon His word, although it be above the reach of our finite understandings, as He Himself knows it is; and therefore doth not require us to understand, but to believe it: and hath made known as much of it as He thought good, for that purpose only, that we might know what He would have us to believe concerning it.

Deut. 6. 4.

Now, one very remarkable thing revealed in the Holy

Scriptures concerning the most glorious Trinity, is this, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, although they be all one and the same God, yet they often exert and manifest Themselves and Their Divine perfections severally, as well as jointly, and so have their several ways of working in the world; as appears from many places, and particularly from the words I have now read: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." For here we have three Divine Persons distinctly named: the "Son," called the "Lord Jesus Christ;" the "Father," here called in an especial manner "God," as being the "root" and "fountain" of the Deity, as the primitive writers style Him; and then here is the Third Person, expressly called "the Holy Ghost." And to each of these Persons, here is a several property or perfection attributed, the Apostle wishing to the Corinthians, the "grace" of one, the "love" of another, and the "communion" of the third: which does not only shew that they are three distinct Persons or subsistencies, but also that they have distinct operations, or their several ways of working and manifesting themselves in the world. Which if rightly understood, would give us great light into what we ought to believe concerning each Person; and how we ought to exercise our faith upon all and every one of Them, according to the discoveries which They are pleased to make of Themselves, with respect to us. And therefore I shall endeavour to explain it as clearly as I can, being a matter of so high a nature: humbly beseeching Him, of whom I speak, so to assist and direct me, that I may say nothing but what is agreeable to His Holy Word, and becoming His Divine Majesty.

For this purpose therefore, we must first consider in general, that this Almighty, most glorious and eternal Being, which we call God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, hath been graciously pleased to shew forth and manifest Himself and His Divine perfections in many wonderful ways, particularly in the Creation and Redemption of the world. In the first He manifested His infinite wisdom, power, and goodness; in the other His infinite love, and justice, and mercy, and truth to mankind; in both the infinite glory of His eternal Godhead. And it is much to be observed, that

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in both these great works that He hath done, whereby to set forth His glory, we find three distinct Persons specified, or particularly named by Himself, as concurring in the doing of them, and each in a way peculiar to Himself. The account that He Himself hath given us of His creation or production of all things out of nothing, begins thus; "In the beginning God created the Heaven and the earth." Where the word in the original אֱלֹהִים, which we translate God, is of the plural number; but it is joined with a verb of the singular, as it is almost every where in the Old Testament. Now although I will not say, that an argument can be drawn from hence to convince a gainsayer, that there are just *three* Persons in the Godhead, because a word of the plural number may possibly signify more: yet seeing that in Hebrew, where there is likewise a dual, three is the first plural number; and seeing the first must in reason be preferred before all other; and seeing God Himself hath in many places of His word acquainted us that there are three Persons and no more in His Godhead: we may reasonably from hence infer, that God calleth Himself by this name of the plural, and joins it with verbs and adjectives of the singular number, on purpose to put us in mind of the Trinity in Unity, that He is Three in One, and that every one of these Divine Persons is to be adored and worshipped alike; that being, as I take it, the true notion of the word. For though the root from whence אלה, *Eloah*, comes, be not preserved in the Hebrew tongue, it is in the Arabic dialect; where الٰہ, *Alaha*, signifies to worship or adore: and accordingly אֱלוֹהַּ, *Eloah*, signifies one that is to be worshipped; and in the plural number אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*, 'persons adorable,' such as are and ought to be worshipped by all things that are; as He, to be sure, ought to be, by whom all things were made, and were made by Him for that end, that He might be worshipped by them. And it is very observable that in the next chapter, when the creation was finished, He is called by two names, יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים, the one of the singular number, the other of the plural; the one signifying His essence, the other the Persons subsisting in it. But in all the first chapter of Genesis, while He was doing this great work, He is not so much as once called by any other name than

[Gen. 1. 1.]

אֱלֹהִים *Adorandi*, or *Adorabiles*, 'persons to be adored;' but by that He is called above thirty times in that one chapter: whereby, I humbly conceive, He hath signified His pleasure to us, that when we consider His creation of the world, we should ascribe it to all the Three Persons, and "adore" them for it. And indeed, that they were all concerned in it, appears from the history of the creation itself: wherein although the Creator, as I have shewn, be all along called אֱלֹהִים, *Elohim*, 'Divine Persons,' in the plural number; yet that name being as constantly there joined with a verb of the singular number, the unity of the Divine Nature or Godhead is likewise signified by it. In which sense it is said in the second verse, "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters;" that is, the Spirit of that "One" God, who is *Elohim*, 'Divine Persons;' of which the Spirit here spoken of must needs be one, forasmuch as He operates in the Creation, which none but God the Creator could do. So that we have here "two" distinct Persons, the Spirit of God, and God Himself, whose Spirit He is, even "the Father;" who, as I observed before, is in an especial manner often called God.

After this we read, that God made all things by His "Word;" "He said, Let there be light, and there was light." Ver. 3. And so He made His works all the six days, until He came to make man, He made them all by His Word: not by any outward "word" spoken, but by speaking in Himself, by willing them to be, and so by His inward, His essential Word; that is, by His eternal and only-begotten Son, as we are fully assured by His Evangelist St. John; who by His direction begins the Gospel of His Son Jesus Christ with this character of Him: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; the same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was not any thing made that was made." John 1. 1, 2, 3. And to the same purpose, St. Paul speaking of the Son of God, saith, "By Him were all things created that are in Heaven, and that are in Earth, visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him." Col. 1. 16; Eph. 3. 9. And elsewhere, "By whom He made the worlds." From all which it appears, that the Word by which God made the Heb. 1. 2.

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world, was His only Son, then with Him: if His Son, then a "Person:" and if *with Him*, then a *distinct* Person from Him. So that now we plainly see three distinct Persons manifesting themselves in the Creation of the world; God the Father, His Son, and His Spirit. As the royal Prophet also long ago observed, saying, "By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the Hosts of them by the breath (or Spirit) of His mouth."

Ps. 33. 6.

To this we may add that remarkable passage which occurs in the formation of man, as both explaining and confirming all that hath been hitherto said: for upon the sixth or last day of the Creation, when God was pleased to make man, it is written; "And God said, Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." In the original it is וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים. And *God* in the plural number *said* in the singular, "He said, let *us* make man, and let *us* make him in *our* image, after *our* likeness;" still in the plural number: which shews as plainly as words can do it, that several Persons concurred in this great work; and that they had all one and the same image and likeness, and therefore were of one and the same nature or essence. Neither can the words possibly bear any other sense: all that the Jews and Socinians have said upon them, according to their blasphemous doctrine, makes them downright nonsense; whereas, according to our Christian doctrine, nothing is more plain and easy. For when the most blessed Trinity was pleased to make man, the chief and lord of all earthly creatures, He did not say as in the making of other creatures, Let there be a man; but, Let *us*, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, make man, and let *us* make him as like unto ourselves, who are all of the same likeness, as a creature can be made. All which might be, as in effect it was, most truly and properly said, according to our common way of speaking: whereas if there were not *several* Divine Persons then in being, or but only one, to whom could God say, Let *us* make man? Who but a Divine Person could do such a work? Or how could He say, Let *us* make him in *our* image, after *our* likeness, if there was only one Person in the world, in whose image and likeness he could be made? No, all the wit of man, and of the Devil himself, can never invalidate the invincible force of this place, to prove that there

Gen. 1. 26.

were several Divine Persons of the same Divine essence, that severally exerted and discovered themselves in the Creation of the world in general, and particularly in the making of mankind.

And as it was in the Creation, so it was likewise in the Redemption of mankind: the world was made by the Word of God, and it was redeemed by the same Word, the Son of God, the Second of the Divine Persons, which St. John calls "the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." All which, as I have shewn, co-operated in the making of man at first; and so they did too in the saving and redeeming him, when he was fallen from the state in which he was at first made. For whereas there were two most critical times appointed for the effecting our redemption; one for the Incarnation of our Redeemer, when "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us," in order to it; and the other for His Baptism, when He was initiated as it were into it, and actually took this great work upon Him: at both these times we find all the Persons of the most glorious Trinity particularly mentioned, as concerned in it.

1 John 5. 7.

[John 1. 14.]

As for the first, when the fulness of time was come, that the Son of God should be incarnate, God sent the Angel Gabriel to acquaint the Blessed Virgin, that He should be conceived and born of her: and, among other things, saith unto her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." Upon the saying of which words, and the Blessed Virgin's expressing her consent, by saying, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to Thy Word;" this great work was done, the Son of God was conceived in her, the "Word was made flesh." Now here we see three Divine Persons concurring in this wonderful work: the Son of God, the Holy Ghost or Spirit of God, and the Highest or the Father, whose Son the one, and whose Spirit or Power the other is. One was conceived: He was conceived by another, and that other was the Power of a third Person. So that in this the first thing that was actually done in order to our Redemption, and upon which the whole work depended, the whole three Persons in the most

Luke 1. 35.

Ver. 38.

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Blessed Trinity were most graciously pleased to shew themselves; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever.

And so they did likewise most wonderfully at the Baptism of our Redeemer, when He was solemnly inaugurated into the Office He had undertaken for us, and accordingly began to set about it. For it is written, "And Jesus, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo! the Heavens were opened unto Him; and He saw the Spirit of God, descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo! a voice from Heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Here all the three Persons of the most Holy Trinity did evidently appear together. For here was a voice from Heaven, saying, "This is My beloved Son," which could be no other but the voice of the Father, who also declared Himself to be so, by calling the other His Son: and then here was the Son of this Father, declared to be so by the Father Himself: and here was also the Spirit of God, descending like a dove, and lighting upon the Son, and so anointing Him to be both a Priest, a Prophet, and a King; who is therefore most properly called the Messiah, or Christ, the anointed of God, and every way qualified to be our Mediator and Redeemer. Yea, it is wonderful to observe, the three infinitely glorious incomprehensible Persons were pleased upon this extraordinary occasion to manifest themselves severally to the very senses of men, to their eyes and ears: for the Father was heard speaking, the Son was seen in the nature of man coming out of the water, and the Holy Ghost was seen in the shape of a dove descending and lighting upon Him. And therefore we may truly say with St. Augustin, that at this time, *Apparet manifestissima Trinitas; Pater in voce, Filius in homine, Spiritus in columbâ:* 'The Trinity appeared most manifestly; the Father in a voice, the Son in a man, the Holy Ghost in a dove.' And with St. Hierome, *Mysterium Trinitatis in Baptismate demonstratur: Dominus baptizatur; Spiritus descendit in habitu columbæ; Patris vox, testimonium Filio perhibentis, auditur:* 'The mystery of the Trinity is demonstrated in the baptism of Christ; the Lord is baptized; the Spirit descendeth in the likeness of a dove; the voice

Matt. 3 16, 17.

Aug. in Evang. Joh. cap. 1. tract. 6. [Tom. 3. pt. 2. p. 332. D. Ed. Bened. 1680.]

Hieron. in Matt. 3. [Hieron. tom. 4. par. 1. p. 12.]

of the Father, giving testimony to the Son, is heard.' And hence it is that this chapter is appointed as a proper lesson at morning upon Trinity Sunday, because the great mystery, which we this day celebrate, is so plainly and fully revealed in it.

And it is much to be observed, that as all the three Divine Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, thus manifested themselves at the Baptism of our Saviour; so He Himself requires, that all who would be His disciples, should be made so by being baptized in the name of all the same Persons: saying to His Apostles, "Go ye therefore and teach," or make "all nations" My disciples, "baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." So that the same Divine Persons, which so manifestly appeared at the Baptism of Christ, are all to be particularly named at the Baptism of every Christian, by Christ's own institution. And no man can be initiated into the Church of Christ, and so made a Christian any other way, but by being so baptized; this being the only way appointed by Christ Himself for that purpose: who thereby hath sufficiently declared, that He will own none for His disciples, but such as are baptized in the name of all the same Persons, which appeared in so miraculous a manner when He Himself was baptized; and also that our Salvation depends upon, and must be attributed unto all of Them. For seeing He Himself hath so ordered it, that none can be brought into a state of Salvation, but by being first baptized in the name of all three, all three must needs be acknowledged to concur in the effecting of it. Matt. 28. 19.

And verily that they do so, appears most evidently also from the words of my text. For as all these Divine Persons manifested themselves in the Creation of the world in general, and at the making of man in particular; as they appeared at the Incarnation and Baptism of our Redeemer; and as our Redeemer Himself requires that all who would partake of that Redemption which He hath purchased, should be baptized in the name of all three; so the Apostle here, by His direction, writing to such as were so baptized at Corinth, and concluding his Epistle to them with an hearty prayer, that they might have all things necessary to their Salvation,

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refers all such things to three Heads, and attributes them severally to the three Persons in the most Holy Trinity; and accordingly prays to each of them, saying, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." So that, did we but understand these words aright, we should thereby know how to exercise our faith in all and each of these Divine Persons, for what is necessary to our obtaining eternal Salvation, according to their several ways of concurring to it.

But for that purpose, before we enter upon the explication of the several parts of the text, it will be necessary to observe some things in general about it. As, first, although here be three several Persons named, and several properties are severally attributed to them, yet they are not several, but all "one and the same individual God." This we are fully assured of by all those reasons, and by all such places of the Holy Scriptures, which demonstrate the unity of the Godhead: as where it is said, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God" (our *Elohim* in the plural number), "is one Lord, one Jehovah." This the Son asserts of the Father and Himself, "I and the Father are one; not εἷς, but ἕν ἐσμεν, one Jehovah, one Being: and St. John of all three, "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one;" where the same word is used again, ἕν εἰσι, *unum sunt*, they *are* in the plural number, but they *are one* in the singular; *one* Being, אֶחָד יְהוָה, *one* Jehovah, *one* God.

[Deut.6.3.] John 10. 30. 1 John 5. 7. [Deut.6.3.]

Hence, in the next place, whatsoever perfections or properties (except such as are purely personal) are attributed to any of these Divine Persons, are the same in all, and may equally be attributed to every one, they being all and every one the same God, in whom all perfections concentre, or rather, who is all perfection itself. And therefore, when we read of "the grace" of one, "the love" of another, and "the fellowship" of the third Divine Person, it is not to be so understood, as if these properties were so peculiar to those Persons to which they are here attributed, that they do not belong also to the other; for they are the same in all, and may be equally attributed to one as well as another; and so

they are in the Holy Scriptures. Here grace is ascribed to the Son, and love unto the Father; in other places love is ascribed to the Son, and grace unto the Father: as where St. Paul saith, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge." And St. John, "Hereby perceive we the love of God (the Son), because He laid down His life for us." Here love is plainly attributed to the Son, and so is grace to the Father; where St. Paul saith, "By the grace of God I am what I am." And, "Not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." And as we here read of the "communion," or "fellowship" of the Holy Ghost, we elsewhere read of the fellowship of the Son; "God is faithful," saith the Apostle, "by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." And St. John saith, "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." Which I therefore observe, lest any should think that we detract any thing from one Person, by attributing it to another: for whatsoever Divine properties are attributed to any one, are hereby attributed unto all; they being all one and the same God, in whom all properties also are one and the same property: and therefore cannot be divided, nor belong to one more than to another, as they are in Him.

Rom. 8. 35. Eph. 3. 9. 1 John 3. 16. 1 Cor. 15. 10. 2 Cor. 1. 12. 1 Cor. 1. 9. 1 John 1. 3.

But then we must observe withal, that notwithstanding this, when the Almighty Being, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is pleased to operate upon things without Him, and so to exert, and manifest Himself to us, there is something particular attributed to one of these Divine Persons more than to another. As it is plain, that it was not the Father, nor the Holy Ghost, but the Son, which took the nature of man upon Him: it was not the Father, nor the Son, but the Holy Ghost, which at the Creation of the world "moved upon the face of the waters;" which, at the Incarnation of Christ, "overshadowed the Blessed Virgin;" and which, upon the day of Pentecost, "came down upon the Apostles." Thus all along in the Holy Scriptures, the Father is said in a peculiar manner to be our Maker, the Son our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost our Sanctifier. And accordingly in my text, where the three Persons are all men-

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tioned together with respect to us, the Apostle prays for something particular from each of them: for the love of the Father, as He is Maker and Governor of the world; for the grace of the Son, as He is the Saviour and Redeemer of mankind; and for the communion of the Holy Ghost, as He is the Sanctifier and Comforter of all the elect people of God: which will serve us as a key to open the whole mystery contained in these words, as we shall see more presently.

But here is still another thing to be observed in general; which is, that the Son is here placed before the Father, whereas reason may seem to require that the Father should be placed first, as He is by the Son Himself, commanding Baptism to be administered in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: and by His beloved Disciple, saying, "There are three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost." According to which order, the Apostle should have said, the love of God the Father, and the grace of Jesus Christ; whereas, he contrariwise puts the Son first, saying, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God:" which being done by the special direction of the Holy Ghost, there was certainly great reason for it. Which that we may rightly understand, we must take notice, that in the places before quoted, the Divine Persons are named in their essential order, that which they have in and among themselves, or with respect to one another: according to which, the Father is placed first, because He begot the Son; the Son is placed second, because He was begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost last, because He proceeds from both. But the Apostle in my text speaks not of the order of the Divine Persons among themselves, but of that which they observe with respect to us and our Salvation. He here wisheth to the Corinthians, all things necessary for their Salvation by Christ; and therefore it was necessary that he should begin first with Christ their Saviour, without whom they could never have had either the love of God, or the communion of the Holy Ghost. It is true, the love of God the Father was the first cause or motive of our Salvation, as our Saviour Himself hath taught us, saying, "That God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever

Matt. 28. 19.

1 John 5. 7.

John 3. 16.

believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." But then we must observe, that our Saviour speaks here of God's love to mankind in general, saying, "God so loved the world:" He doth not speak of His love to particular men; it was out of His infinite love to fallen man in general, that "He sent His Son into the world;" but His love to any particular man is only in, and for the sake of His said Son, and no otherwise. For by nature we are all enemies to God, and therefore He is so to us: and there is no way for us to be reconciled to Him, or to have Him reconciled to us, but by His Son. For, as the Apostle saith, "When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." And if it be by His Son only that we are reconciled to God, it must needs be only by His Son that we can have His love and favour: which He therefore never shews to any man, but only upon the account of "Him in whom He is well pleased." But as the Apostle saith, nothing "can Separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Whereby we are given to understand, that the love which God the Father hath for any of us, is only in His Son, and for His sake, without whom we could expect nothing but wrath and vengeance from Him: and by consequence, that the grace of Christ is most properly here placed before the love of God, seeing we cannot have this, unless we have that first. The same may be said also of the communion of the Holy Ghost: for that likewise is "shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," as the same Apostle teacheth us. Wherefore, seeing that we can never have either the love of God the Father, or the communion of God the Holy Ghost, but only by the grace of God the Son; there was all the reason in the world that the Apostle should pray for this first, and say first, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ," then "the love of God," and lastly, "the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

Rom. 5. 10.

[Matt. 3. 17.] Rom. 8. 39.

Tit. 3. 5.

These things being thus premised in general, we shall easily discover the meaning of the several parts of the text. The first thing which the Apostle here wisheth to the Corinthians, is, "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ;" which is a phrase he delights in very much. The common saluta-

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tion that he useth at the beginning of every one of his thirteen Epistles, to those he wrote to, runs thus; "Grace be to you, and peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ." And at the end of his epistles, he sometimes saith in short, "Grace be with you." But most usually he concludes with, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you." And so St. John concludes the Book of Revelations, and the whole New Testament. From whence we may infer, that grace is to be had only by Christ; that His grace is the greatest blessing that can be desired; and that where the grace of Christ is, there is also the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, which are therefore particularly mentioned in my text, that we may know from whence they come, and that they are to be understood, whcresoever the grace of Christ is mentioned.

Col. 4. 18; Tit. 3. 15; 1 Tim. 6. 21; 2 Tim. 4. 22. Rom. 16. 24; 1 Cor. 16. 23; Gal. 6. 18; Phil. 4. 23; 1 Thess. 5. 28; 2 Thess. 3. 18; Philem. ver. 25. Apoc. 22. 21.

But then the question is, what is meant by the grace of the "Lord Jesus Christ?" and how it comes to be so often appropriated unto Him? For which it will be necessary to consider that remarkable passage in the Gospel of St. John, where he having asserted the Eternal and Divine nature of the Word or Son of God, he saith, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. — And of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Here we see first, that the Word or Son of God was made flesh, that is, He took upon Him the nature of man in general, so as to become Emanuel, 'God with us,' God and man in one Person; and as such, He is here said to be full of grace and truth: where by grace I do not question but we are to understand, that which in the Old Testament is called חֶסֶד 'mercy;' these two חֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת, 'mercy and truth,' being very frequently put together, mercy always before truth: as where it is said, "All the paths of the Lord are mercy and truth." "Mercy and truth are met together." "By mercy and truth, iniquity is purged." "Mercy and truth preserve the king." Thus they are joined together. "Thus God proclaimeth Himself to be abundant in goodness and truth," where the word which we translate goodness, is the same which in the places

John 1. 14, 16, 17. Ps. 25. 10. Ps. 85. 10. Prov. 16. 6. Prov. 20. 28. Gen. 32. 10; 2 Sam. 2. 6; 15. 20; Ps. 36. 5; 40. 11. 57. 3, 10; 61. 7; 89. 1, 2, 14; 98. 3; 100. 5; 115. 1; 138. 2; 117. 2; Prov. 3. 3; 14. 22. Exod. 34. 6.

before quoted is rendered mercy, and so it is rightly translated in that parallel place; "But Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious; long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth." Ps. 86. 15. And accordingly God the Son, as incarnate, is here said to be full of grace, or mercy, and truth. "And of His fulness," saith St. John, "all we have received." We have none but what we receive from Him, and how much soever we receive, He is still full: as the sun is still full of light, notwithstanding that we continually receive and enjoy it. Neither do we only receive of His fulness in general, but we receive grace for grace, that is, all manner of grace, according to that fulness which is in Him. In Him is the fulness and perfection of all grace and mercy: and for that it is in Him our Head, we of Him receive whatsoever grace or mercy we have occasion for.

And the reason is, because, as it here follows, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." The Law, as given by Moses, threatened death and damnation, even all manner of judgment without mercy, to *all* that continued not in all things written in it. Which no man having done, all are by the Law condemned to die, and suffer all the punishments which are there threatened, without any hopes of mercy, there being none there promised. But as the Law was thus given by Moses, grace, or mercy, and truth came, ἐγένετο, 'was made' by Jesus Christ, as the author and procurer of it. The Law hath concluded all under sin, and therefore hath passed the sentence of condemnation upon all. And if the sentence be ever revoked or omitted, or if it be not actually executed, it must be acknowledged to be a great mercy. But there is no such mercy promised in the Law given by Moses: there is not a word of that there, nor any where else, but only in the Gospel of Christ; who having in our nature undergone the punishments to which we are condemned by the Law, He hath thereby made way for mercy to be shewn us, by God's accepting of His death instead of ours, and so acquitting or discharging us from it: yea, He hath thereby merited or purchased mercy for us, all manner of mercy, in that His death was of infinitely more value, than all ours could ever have been. For that God is never merciful to any, but only for the sake of His Son, and

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upon the account of His death, is plain from His never shewing any mercy, but only to those for whom Christ died. The fallen angels stand in as much need of mercy as fallen man, but they never had, nor ever will have any, because Christ did not die for them. But He having taken our nature upon Him, and in it suffered the punishments which by the Law were due to us, God is graciously pleased for His sake to promise grace or mercy to us: and whatsoever grace or mercy we receive from Him, it comes to us only by Jesus Christ: as the Holy Ghost here assures us, saying, "That grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." It was in Him that grace was at first promised to us, and it is in Him that such promises are verified or fulfilled. "For," as the
2 Cor. 1. 20. Apostle saith, "all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him, Amen," that is, in Him they were all made, and in Him they are all confirmed and performed to us. And therefore truth is not here opposed, as it is commonly thought, only to the types and figures of the Law, but it signifies more especially the truth and certainty of the promises which God hath made to mankind of grace and mercy in His Son. And that is the reason that mercy, as I observed before, is not only here, but all along in the Holy Scriptures, put before truth: because mercy is first promised, and then truly granted according to that promise, and both by Christ. It was by Him that grace was at first promised to us, and it is by Him that the truth of such promises is assured to us,
Ps. 89. 33, 34, 49. and so both "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

From hence we may gather what is here meant by "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," in my text. It is the grace, the free undeserved favour and mercy; it is the grace of the Lord, the Almighty God, the Eternal and only-begotten Son, of the same substance and glory with the Father; it is the grace of the Lord Jesus, the most High God made Man, and so become Jesus, a Saviour to save His people from their sins; it is the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, of God our Saviour, anointed to be to us a Prophet, a Priest, and King, and so fully qualified, and able to do all things necessary for our Salvation. And therefore all such things are here signified by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ: all things that are required, all things that can any way

conduce to our eternal Salvation; they are all contained in, and they all proceed from His grace and mercy to us, without whom we can neither have, nor do any thing at all towards it. But by Him, there is nothing but we may have, nothing but we can do, that He would have us, in order to our being saved. By Him we are "called out of darkness into His marvellous light." By Him we have grace to repent, and turn every one from his own iniquities, so that sin "shall not have dominion over us, seeing we are not under the Law, but under grace." "By Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace." By Him we are justified freely through His grace, "and accounted righteous before God Himself." "By Him being justified by faith, we have peace with God," and are as perfectly reconciled unto Him, as if He had never been angry or displeased with us. By Him we have "power to become the sons of God, and if sons, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Him who is heir of all things." By Him "we are washed from our sins in His own blood, and are made Kings and Priests to God and His Father." By Him "we can overcome the world, and triumph over Death itself." By Him we can do, and by Him we can suffer whatsoever God sees good to lay upon us: for "His grace is always sufficient for us, and His strength made perfect in our weakness; so that we can do all things through Christ which strengthens us." By Him we have a place prepared for us in Heaven, "that where He is, there we may be also, to behold His glory, and be glorified together with Him." In short, by Him we may have every thing that is any way necessary, either to the beginning, the carrying on, or the perfecting our Salvation; "for He is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." All these things we have by Christ, and receive them of that infinite grace and mercy that is in Him. And therefore the Apostle wishing to the Corinthians "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," he thereby wished them every thing relating to their eternal Salvation, as coming wholly and solely from His grace and mercy.

Rom. 1. 6; 1 Pet. 2. 9.
Acts 5. 31; 3. 26; Rom. 6. 14.
Eph. 1. 7; Col. 1. 14; Eph. 4. 32.
Rom. 3. 24; Tit. 3. 7; 2 Cor. 5. 21.
Rom. 5. 1. 10.
John 1. 12; Rom. 8. 17; Heb. 1. 2.
Rev. 1. 5, 6.
1 John 5. 4, 5; 1 Cor. 15. 57.
2 Cor. 12. 9; Phil. 4. 13.
John 14. 2, 3; 17. 24; Rom. 8. 17.
Heb. 7. 25.

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The next thing that follows in my text, is, "the love of God." And it may well follow upon "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ" here, for it doth so every where. For He, the Eternal Son of God, having, as I have shewn, reconciled us to His Father, wheresoever His grace is, the love of the Father follows in course, who being always well pleased with all that partake of Him, hath a special love for them; the love of a father to his children, who is not only most tenderly affected towards them, but takes particular care of them, provides all things necessary for them, corrects them when they do amiss, encourages them when they do well, and settles a sufficient maintenance upon them, that they may live comfortably in the world, according to every one's estate and quality. Such is the love of the great God to those, who, by the grace of Christ, are made His children. He keeps them always under His own care and conduct; He gives them all things necessary, both for life and godliness: He "chasteneth them, not for His own pleasure, but for their own profit, that they may be partakers of His holiness." He plentifully rewards all the services they perform Him in this world; and in the next He settles a kingdom upon every one of them, the kingdom of Heaven itself, where they ever live as happily as it is possible for creatures to live: and all because He loves them as His own children by adoption, and the grace of His only-begotten Son.

[Heb. 12. 10.]

This therefore is here meant by the love of God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in Him our God, and our Father. It is the love of God, as He is the Maker, Preserver and Governor of the whole world, and orders and disposeth of all things in it, according to His own will and pleasure; and therefore as for His own glory, so likewise for the good of these He loves and is well pleased with them. For we know, saith the Apostle, "That all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose." All that love God, God loves: and seeing He loves them, He makes all things concur to their advantage. For which purpose, by His good Providence, He makes them of such a temper as will best suit with the circumstances He designs for them, or

Rom. 8. 28.

else orders their circumstances so as will best suit with the temper He made them of: He measures out such a proportion of the good things of this life to them, as He knows will be good for them, and no more. He allots them such a place to live in upon earth, where they may enjoy the means whereby to obtain grace and Salvation by His Son. He keeps them from falling into any evil, and all evil from falling upon them. He defends them from all their enemies, or else turns their hearts, and makes them to become their friends. He infatuates the counsels, and defeats all the ill designs that men or devils can form against them. He hears the prayers they put up unto Him in His Son's name, and for His sake accepts of all the duties they perform to Him. He is with them wheresoever they are, to direct, assist, and prosper them in whatsoever they do. He sanctifieth and blesseth all manner of occurrences to them, so that every thing which happens, is, all things considered, the best that could happen to them. There are many, I may truly say, innumerable such instances of the love which God the Father is pleased for His Son's sake to manifest to those who are regenerate, and so made His children in Him, even by His ordinary Providence: and where that fails, He is pleased to do it in an extraordinary and miraculous manner, as we see in the children of Israel; for He having a special love for them, by reason of their near relation to His Son incarnate, He brought them into and out of Egypt: He led them, He fed them, He clothed them with Miracles for forty years together; "And all because He loved them," as it is said. And particularly when Balaam was hired to curse them, "God turned His curse into a blessing, because He loved them." Deut. 4. 37; 7. 7, 8. [10. 15.] Deut. 23. 5.

Thus He one way or other always preserves those He loves from all things that may hurt them, and withholds nothing from them that will really do them good: but He carries them through all "the changes and chances of this mortal life," so as to bring them at last to Heaven, where they clearly see His love in every thing that ever befell them, continually praise and adore Him for it, and are eternally happy in the perfect enjoyment of it. From all which it appears, how great a blessing it is, to have the love of

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God the Father, the Almighty Creator and Governor of all things, how necessarily it follows upon the grace of His Only-begotten Son; and by consequence, with how great reason, as well as charity to the Corinthians, the Apostle here, next to "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," prays they might have the love of God.

And that their happiness might be complete, he adds also, "The communion of the Holy Ghost," the third Person in the most Blessed Trinity; called the "Ghost," or "Spirit," both of the Father and the Son, because He proceeds from both: and "Holy" in a peculiar manner, because all the holiness that is in the creatures proceeds from Him. And to have "communion" or "fellowship" with Him, is to partake of His holiness, and of all the glorious effects of the Grace of Christ, and the Love of God in Him: "For as He proceedeth both from the Father and the Son, both the Father and the Son act by Him;" and therefore He is called "the Finger of God." The Father acteth by Him in the government of the world, and all the parts of it; the Son in the government of the Church, and all particular members in it: and whatsoever blessings we receive from the Father, through the merits and mediation of the Son, they are all conveyed to us by the Holy Ghost, which for that purpose abides with us for ever. It is He, as proceeding from, and sent by our Saviour to do it, "that enlightens our minds, and teacheth us all things necessary to our everlasting peace." It is He that keepeth us from error, heresy, and schism, and guides us into all truth, both in faith and manners. It is He that sanctifies, renews, and regenerates us, and so makes us new creatures, and the children of the most High God. It is He that beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God. It is He that "mortifies" the deeds of the body, that "quickens" our souls, and "worketh in us, both to will and to do, of His good pleasure." It is He that endues men with spiritual gifts, suitable to the work which God requires of them: to one He gives the "word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, to another faith, to another the gifts of healing, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discerning of spirits, to another divers kinds of

Luke 11. 20.
John 14. 16.
Eph. 1. 17. Isa. 11. 2; John 14. 26.
John 16. 13.
2 Thess. 2. 13; John 3. 5. 6. 8; Tit. 3. 5.
Rom. 8. 16.
Rom. 8. 13; John 6. 63; Phil. 2. 13.
1 Cor. 12. 8, 9, 10.

tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues." It is He that produceth in us "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance;" which are therefore said to be the fruit of the Spirit. And so is all manner of goodness and virtue, wheresoever it is found among men; it all springs from the good Spirit of God, as from its root, and from thence also receives all its nourishment, increase and strength. It is He also that is our only Comforter, who supports and cheers our spirits, by manifesting God's love and favour to us, lifting up the light of His countenance upon us, keeping our hearts fixed upon our promised inheritance, filling us with firm hopes and constant expectations of it, and so giving us peace, and joy, and satisfaction of mind in whatsoever happens here below. In short, whatsoever direction, assistance or power we have, or can have, of thinking, or desiring, or speaking, or doing any thing that is truly good, it is communicated to us by the Spirit of God our Saviour, and therefore is all comprehended under this one great blessing which the Apostle here wisheth for in the last place, even "the communion of the Holy Ghost."

Gal. 5. 22, 23.

Eph. 3. 16.

John 16. 7; Acts 9. 31; Rom. 14. 17; &c.

The several parts of the text being thus explained, we may easily observe the meaning of the whole to be this; that the Apostle here prays that the Corinthians might have, first, the grace of God the Son; that is, all the mercy which He, as the Redeemer of Mankind, had purchased for them with His blood. Secondly, that they might have the love of God the Father; that is, all the favours which He, as the supreme Governor of the world, could shew them. And, thirdly, that they might have the Communion of the Holy Ghost; that is, all the gifts, graces, and comforts which He could communicate unto them, both from the Father and the Son: or, in short, that they might have all things, that God the Son, or God the Father, or God the Holy Ghost, could do for them, according to their several ways of working in the world; that is, all things that could any way contribute to make them completely happy. All which David also, or the Church by him, prays for in the same method and order, saying, "God אֱלֹהִים be mer-

Ps. 67. 1. [Bib. vers.]

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ciful unto us, and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us."

Now from hence we may learn, how necessary it is to believe in the most Blessed Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, Three Persons, One God; seeing they all are pleased to concern themselves so much about us, and our happiness depends upon them all. Hence we may learn to confide and trust on all and every one of these Divine Persons, for all things relating to our happiness and Salvation. Hence we may learn what infinite cause we have to praise and adore God for His infinite goodness to us poor mortals upon earth, and to sing with the choir of Heaven,

Isa. 6. 3. "Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory."

Hence we may learn how much we are obliged to serve, and love, and please God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, who is thus infinitely gracious, and loving, and bountiful unto us. Hence we may learn what great reason our Church hath to appoint, that at the end of every Psalm, as well as upon other occasions, we should say or sing, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost." Hence, lastly, we may learn, wherefore our Church concludes her daily prayers, as the Apostle doth this Epistle, with the words of my text, even because they contain in short all that we can pray for, and are in effect the same, the form which God Himself prescribed, wherewith the Priests should bless the people. "On this wise," saith He,

Numb. 6. 24, 25, 26. "ye shall bless the children of Israel; the Lord bless thee and keep thee: the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace." Where Jehovah, the Lord, is thrice repeated, and in the original hath in each place a several accent, to denote, as the Jews themselves acknowledge, some great mystery; which can be no other but the most Blessed Trinity, all the three Persons whereof are here called, every one, the Lord, Jehovah. The Father is placed first; but the blessings bestowed severally by each Person, are the same which are ascribed to them in my text. And when the Priest pronounced this blessing to the people (as

we still do in the visitation of the sick), God promised that He Himself would accordingly bless them. And if you faithfully and devoutly receive it as ye ought, I do not question but He will do so now, upon my pronouncing in His Name the same Blessing, according to this Apostolical form in my text; "The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God, and the Communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all." Amen.

SERMON XIII.

THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

Exodus iii. 14.

And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. And He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent Me unto you.

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Seeing all the happiness that man is capable of, consisteth in the enjoyment of that supreme and all-glorious Being, which we call GOD; and seeing we can never enjoy Him, unless we first serve Him, nor serve Him, unless we first know Him: hence it necessarily follows, that as ever we desire to be truly happy, our first and great care must be to know God, not only so as to acknowledge Him to be, but so as to have a due sense, and right and clear apprehensions of Him, and of those infinite perfections that are concentered in Him: for it is only such a knowledge of God as this, that will incline our affections to Him, and put us upon constant and sincere endeavours so to serve Him here, that we may enjoy Him for ever. But this we can never attain to, without consulting those Divine Oracles, wherein this Almighty Being hath been pleased to make known Himself, and to discover His perfections to us. Out of which, therefore, I shall endeavour at this time to shew what kind of thoughts and conceptions we ought to frame in our minds concerning the most High God, and what influence they will have upon our lives and actions.

But who is sufficient for these things? At least, who am I, a silly worm, that I should take upon me to speak of Him, by whom alone I speak? and being myself but a finite

and sinful creature, should strive to unveil the nature of the Infinite and most Holy God? Alas! I cannot so much as begin to think of Him, but immediately my thoughts are confounded, my heart is perplexed, my mind amazed, my head turns round, my whole soul seems to be unhinged and overwhelmed within me. His mercy exalts me, His justice depresseth me, His wisdom astonisheth me, His power affrights me, His glory dazzles mine eyes; "and by reason of His highness," as Job speaks, "I cannot endure." But the least glimpse of Him makes me abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes before Him. But how then shall I dare to discourse of Him, and endeavour to manifest and declare His greatness and glory unto others? Verily, if He Himself, in His Holy Word, had not given me both leave and a command to do it, I should not have presumed to offer at it. But seeing He hath been pleased, both to blame His people for not knowing Him, and His Ministers for not making Him known to His people; and hath enjoined us so to display and discover His Divine perfections, that others may fear and love Him: in obedience to His command, I shall endeavour to stammer out, as well as I can, what we are to believe and conceive of Him, by whom alone we are able to believe and conceive of any thing else: humbly beseeching Him so to assist and direct me in it, by the same Spirit whereby He wrote the Holy Scriptures, that I may say nothing of Him but what is right and proper, agreeable to the same Scriptures, and becoming His majesty and honour. Job 31. 23.

In an humble confidence of which assistance, I should now enter upon this Divine subject. But where shall I begin to speak of Him, who had no beginning at all, and will have no end? And what words can I take unto myself, whereby to express His glory, who infinitely surpasseth all expressions whatsoever? All expressions, did I say! yea, and conceptions too: for His nature is so pure, His goodness so great, His knowledge so transcendent, His power so boundless, His wisdom, justice, and mercy so mysterious, His glory so incomprehensible, and all His perfections so high, so infinitely high, that our highest conceptions of Him are still infinitely below Him. And therefore when He would make known Himself to us in His Holy Scriptures, He is pleased

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to condescend to our capacities, so as to fit His expressions to our weak apprehensions; not speaking of Himself as He is in Himself, for then we should not be able to apprehend what He meant: but as a nurse to a child, who utters not her mind in complete sentences, but lisps it out in broken language, fitted to the shallow capacity of its tender years; even so doth the Great GOD speak to us in such language as we are best able to understand: sometimes making use of the names that we give to the several parts of our bodies, and passions of our minds, to signify those infinite perfections that are in Him, or the effects of them unto us. Thus He useth the word "eye" to signify His omniscience, because the eye is that part of the body whereby we see; and the word "hand" to express His power, because it is by that we act. Thus also He useth the words "rejoicing," "grieving," "loving," "hating," "repenting," and the like, to denote something in Him, which we cannot so well apprehend, as by the dark resemblance which these passions in us have of it.

And seeing it is by names that we usually know both persons and things, and distinguish one from another; hence God is pleased to give Himself such names in Holy Writ, from whence we may gather what He would have us think of His nature, so as to distinguish Him from all other things. That which He Himself, in a more especial manner calls
Isa. 42. 8. His name, is JEHOVAH, as we commonly pronounce it, which both the Septuagint in the Old, and the Apostles and Evangelists in the New Testament, constantly interpret by Κύριος; respecting certainly not the modern, but the original use and etymology of the word, wherein it agrees exactly with it: for as Jehovah comes from הָיָה 'to be,' so doth Κύριος come from κύρω 'to be:' for that κύρω was anciently the same
[Hesych. in voc. ed. Ald. Ven. 1514.] with εἰμὶ καὶ ὑπάρχω, is plain both from Hesychius, and several of the ancient Greek scholiasts. But because that word is commonly used to signify a lord or governor, therefore our English translation always renders it THE LORD, in capital or great letters: and wheresoever we read THE LORD so written, it answers to יְהוָה; that is, to the most proper and Essential name of God, signifying Essence or Being itself. Which therefore must needs raise up our

understanding to the highest and most abstracted notion of God, that we can possibly reach; no thought being able to rise higher than to Being itself.

Hence therefore it having pleased the most High God to reveal and represent Himself to us under this name or title, He thereby suggests to us, that He would not have us apprehend Him as any particular or limited Being, but as a Being in general, or the Being of all Beings, who gives being to, and therefore exerciseth authority over all things in the world.

And it may not be unworthy our observation, that in the first chapter of Genesis, before He had perfected His Word, and settled all things in their being, He is not so much as once called "The Lord," but only "God:" but in the second chapter, when the Creation was finished, He is often called יְהוָה, THE LORD, in capital letters. From whence it is easy to gather, that this glorious name of God is used chiefly in reference to the creatures, to which He gives being and existence, and over which He therefore is most properly the Lord and Sovereign. Thus He Himself seems to explain His own name, where He saith, "I am Jehovah, THE LORD, that maketh all things, that stretcheth forth the Heavens alone, that spreadeth abroad the Earth by Myself;" intimating that He is therefore called "Jehovah," because that He, and He alone, gives being and existence to all things in Heaven and earth. And hence it is that He is so often called יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת 'THE LORD of Hosts:' neither, as I remember, is this great name ever used with any other genitive case after it. He is never called the LORD of any one thing, but only of Hosts. He is, I confess, sometimes called the Lord of the whole earth: but in all such places it is not in the original יְהוָה, but אֲדוֹן; and therefore is, or at least ought to be, always written in small, not in capital letters, to distinguish it from "Jehovah:" for He is never called THE LORD of any one or more particular things or parts of the creation, but only of the whole, THE LORD of the Universe; for so the word "Sabaoth" or "Hosts" properly signifies. "Thus," saith Moses, "the Heavens and the Earth were finished, and all the Host of them," that is, of each of them. Where the word צָבָא 'Host' is

Isa. 44. 24.

Gen. 2. 1.

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plainly used to signify every thing that is in Heaven or earth; or, as we say, in the whole world, which in Hebrew is always expressed by those two words, Heaven and Earth. So that the LORD of Hosts, in the plural number, is the same in effect, as if we should say, the Being of all Beings, that gives essence and existence to every thing that is.

Another thing much to be observed concerning this great name, is, that as it never hath any other genitive case but Sabaoth after it, so neither hath it ever, or very rarely, any adjective except אֶחָד 'one,' joined with it, at least in the original. He is often called a Great, a Just, a Merciful, an Almighty God; but never a Great, a Just, a Merciful, an Almighty Jehovah, but absolutely יְהוָה, 'The LORD.' And the reason is, because all perfections are necessarily included in that very name itself. So that to add any thing to it, would be a mere tautology, or rather a diminution from it, as limiting or confining it to some one perfection, wheras all are signified by it.

Thus much I thought good to premise concerning this, the great and most glorious name of God; because it will make way for our better understanding the words of my text, wherein He is pleased to manifest Himself under the same notion that is intimated to us by that name. For here we find, that Moses being ordered by God to carry the Children of Israel out of Egypt, he said unto him, in the words before my text, "Behold when I come unto the Children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your Fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? what shall I say unto them?" Then it follows in my text, "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM. And He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the Children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Where we may observe, that He speaks of Himself only as Being in general, אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, 'I am that I am,' and absolutely, אֶהְיֶה, 'I am;' and so manifests Himself unto Moses under the same notion that is signified by His great name יְהוָה before spoken of. And therefore some of the Rabbins have not improbably conjectured, that the proper pronunciation of that great name is Jehveh. So that as God speaking of Himself, saith in the first person, אֶהְיֶה,

'I am;' so when we speak of Him, He would have us only to say in the third person, יְהוָה, 'He is.' Be sure that which God is pleased here to say of Himself, will give us great light into the proper sense and meaning of that name, as coming from a root of the same signification. Insomuch that God Himself seems here to explain to us the reason wherefore He is called Jehovah, by saying of Himself, "I am that I am," and simply "I am." Both which expressions we shall now by His assistance briefly consider.

First, therefore, when Moses asked God's name, He answered, "I am that I am." He doth not say, I am the Great, the Living, the True, the Everlasting God; He doth not say, I am the Almighty Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the whole world; but "I am that I am:" intimating, that if Moses desired such a name of God, as might fully describe His nature as in itself, that is a thing impossible, there being no words to be found in any language, whereby to express the glory of an infinite Being, especially so as that finite creatures should be able fully to conceive it; yet however, in these words He is pleased to acquaint us what kind of thoughts He would have us to entertain of Him. Insomuch that could we but rightly apprehend what is couched under and intended by them, we should doubtless have as high and true conceptions of God, as it is possible for creatures to reach to. For these words do questionless contain as full and clear an answer to the intent of Moses's question, as the question itself was capable of: but Moses desiring to know God's name, intended certainly by that to understand His nature, who and what He is. To which He is pleased to return this answer, "I am that I am:" or as the words also signify, "I will be that I will be." Which expression suggests to us these following notions of the most High God.

First, that He is one Being, existing in and of Himself. His unity is implied in that He saith, I; His existence in that He saith I AM; His existence in and of Himself, in that He saith, I AM THAT I AM; that is, I am in and of Myself, not receiving any thing from, nor depending upon any other. For he that is not of himself, but depends continually upon another for his being, as all creatures do, can never certainly

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say, I am that I am, or I will be that I will be; because he can never be sure but that immediately he may not be: for He from whom we receive our beings, may deprive us of them when He pleaseth. So that we can never promise ourselves to be, any longer than just we find ourselves in being: because it
Acts 17. 28. is in God, that we not only "live and move," but "have our" very "being" too. And not only we, but all the creatures in the world subsist continually in this one universal Being, that existeth in and of Himself: insomuch, that should He cease to give being to other things, all things would immediately cease to be. Hence Job in his complaints wisheth
Job 6. 9. that God would "Let loose His hand," and "cut him off," or make an end of him, as the word may be rendered. For if He should but once let go His hold of us, and not keep us up any longer in our being, we should at the same moment fall down to nothing, and so there would be an end of us.

But here we may further observe, that as God plainly asserts the unity of His nature in saying "I am," so He as plainly asserts a Trinity of Persons in that nature, by calling Himself אֱלֹהִים in the plural number; (and three is the first number that can properly, at least in Hebrew, be called plural) for it is here said, that Elohim said to Moses, "I am that I am."

And nothing is more usual than for these two names of God, Jehovah and Elohim, to be put together, the one of the singular, the other of the plural number; the first denoting the Unity of the Trinity, the second the Trinity of the Unity.
Deut. 6. 4. As where it is said, "Hear, O Israel, THE LORD our God is one LORD." Jehovah, THE LORD, signifies His essence; "our God," or as it is in Hebrew, "our Elohim," signifies the Persons in that essence, of which persons it is here said, that "they are one LORD, one Jehovah," not "one Elohim." For though other adjectives and verbs too of the singular number, are all along in Scripture joined with Elohim, where it is used for the true God, to shew the unity of the Divine Persons in the same nature; yet אֶחָד 'one,' is never joined with it. We never read of "one Elohim," for that would confound the Persons, being as much as to say "one Divine Persons," as if they were not distinct from one

another: but it is always said, they are one Jehovah or essence. And so St. John expresseth it, where speaking of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, he saith, οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι, 'these three are one Being.' For so the word ἓν plainly signifies. And hence it is that the Council of Nice declared the Son to be ὁμοούσιον, of the same essence or substance with the Father; there being no word certainly in all the Greek tongue, whereby they could have expressed themselves in that great mystery, more agreeably to the words, as well as to the sense of Scripture, where God is pleased to say of Himself, that He is one Jehovah, μία οὐσία, 'one essence.' In which although there be "Elohim," three distinct Persons; yet all and every one of them may equally say, as they do in my text, "I am that I am."

1 John 5. 7; John 10. 30. [Hardouin. tom. i. p. 421.]

Which expression implies also, that as God is only one, so He is a most pure and simple Being. For here we see He admits nothing into the manifestation of Himself, but pure Essence; saying, "I am that I am," that is, Being itself, without any mixture or composition. And therefore we must not conceive of God, as made up of several parts or faculties, or ingredients, but only as one who only "is that He is," and whatsoever is in Him is Himself. And although we read of several properties attributed to Him in Scripture, as wisdom, goodness, justice, &c., we must not apprehend them to be several powers, habits, or qualities, as they are in us: for as they are in God, they are neither distinguished from one another, nor from His nature or essence, in whom they are said to be. In whom, I say, they are said to be, for to speak properly, they are not in Him, but are His very essence or nature itself. Which acting severally upon several objects, seems to us to act from several properties or perfections in Him; whereas all the difference is, only in our different apprehensions of the same thing. God in Himself is a most simple and pure act, and therefore cannot have any thing in Him, but what is that most simple and pure act itself; which seeing it bringeth upon every creature what it deserves, we apprehend it as an act of justice, and therefore call God a Just God: seeing it doth not always punish sin so soon as we conceive it might, we apprehend it as an act of patience, and therefore call God a

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Patient God: seeing although it doth certainly one time or other punish the offence, yet upon some other account it often pardons the offender, we apprehend it as an act of mercy, and therefore call God a Merciful God. The same may be said of all His other properties: they are all one and the same act in Him; but we are forced to apprehend them severally, by reason of the finiteness of our understandings, who are not able to conceive of an infinite Being wholly as it is in itself, but only by piece-meal, as it manifesteth itself to us: whereas God, whose understanding is infinite as Himself, doth not apprehend Himself under the distinct notions of wisdom, or goodness, or justice, or the like, but only as Jehovah. And therefore in my text, He doth not say, I am wise, or just, or good, but simply, "I am that I am." Moreover, seeing God is here pleased to say only that He is, without respect to time or place, it necessarily follows that He is in all places, at all times, '*in omnibus, extra omnia, ubique totus*,' as St. Augustin words it, 'in all things, beyond all things, every where wholly the same God.' So that He is now as really here, as He is in the highest Heavens: only He is said to be there in a more especial manner, because He unveils and manifests Himself in a more especial manner to His creatures that are there. And for the like reason He is said to be specially present in places dedicated to His service, because He distributes His blessings more especially to those who meet to serve Him in such places; according to His promise, saying, "In all places where I record My name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee;" that is, "I will come unto thee by blessing of thee." But as to His essence, He cannot be said to come or go from one place to another, for He is in all places alike; and being always every where, He must needs likewise always know every thing that is, and every thing that is done in the whole world. But "Such knowledge is too wonderful for us;" neither is it communicable to any creature, it being His great prerogative, who can say, wheresoever any thing is, there "I am that I am." And as the omnipresence and omniscience, so also the omnipotence of God is clearly implied in those words: for that likewise being a perfection, yea such a perfection, that without it there can be no perfec-

[Serm. 227. de S. Vincent. tom. v. pt. ii. p. 1119 F. cf. p. 1122 G.]

Exod. 20. 24.

[Ps. 139. 5.]

tion at all, it must needs be in Him who is that He is, even Being and perfection itself. To this purpose Jonathan's Chaldee Paraphrase upon the words is very observable; who interprets "I am that I am," by "I am He that spake the word, and the world was made; that spake the word, and all things were made." The Hierusalem Targum understands them also in the same sense, even of the power of God, whereby He is able to command all things out of nothing, only with a word speaking: and indeed He being Jehovah, Being itself, whatsoever He wills should be, must needs be just as He would have it. And this is the proper notion of omnipotence, whereby God "doth whatsoever He pleaseth." Thus it was that He made all things at first, only by expressing His will and pleasure they should be, and immediately they were. He only said, "Let there be light, and there was light: let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and it was so." Thus it was that our Saviour cured the Leper, and so manifested His Divine power: He only said, "I will, be thou clean," and immediately the leprosy was gone, and the man was perfectly clean. And thus it was that He raised Lazarus from the dead: He only said, "Lazarus, come forth," and the words were no sooner out of His mouth, but Lazarus came out of his grave. And thus it is that God still governs and orders every thing in the world, only by willing it should be so, and so it is: and therefore the Apostle saith, "Who hath resisted His will?" implying His will to be the same with His power, which none can resist. Well then may He be called the "Lord God Almighty," seeing He is that He is, and doth what He will in the whole world.

["Ille qui dixit Mundo, Esto, et fuit." Targ. Hierosol. in V. lib. leg. ad Exod. cap. iii. v. 14. Ed. Lond. 4to. 1649.]

Ps. 115. 3.

Matt. 8. 3.

John 11. 43, 44.

Rom. 9. 19.

[Rev. 4. 8.]

Furthermore, Almighty God, by saying, "I am that I am," assures us also, that He always is the same that He is, "without" any "variableness or shadow of turning." And therefore He makes use of His name Jehovah (of the same signification) to shew His immutability, saying, "I am Jehovah, I change not; therefore ye sons of Jacob are not consumed." Where we may likewise observe, that His immutability signified by this name, is to be understood not only of His essence, but likewise of His decrees, His threats and promises. For He gives this as the reason why they

Jam. 1. 17.

Mal. 3. 6.

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were not consumed, "because He is Jehovah," who doth not change nor alter His mind, but faithfully performs the promises which He had made them. Hence it is that we read in Moses and the Prophets, when He threatens any judgment, or promises any blessing to His people, He commonly confirmeth it by saying, "Thus saith the Lord," or "I am the Lord," or, "Ye shall know that I am the Lord." In all which places He brings His great name in, as an argument of the immutability of His counsel; that which He saith shall most certainly come to pass, because He that saith it is the Lord, Jehovah. And by this we may see into the true meaning of that, which hath hitherto seemed so obscure a
Exod. 6. 2, 3. place, where God saith to Moses, "I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them;" that is, I never made known Myself, nor confirmed My promise to them, as I now do to thee, by saying, "I am Jehovah." For this is the first place in all the Scriptures where these words are used as an entire proposition of themselves, for the confirmation of what is said: but after this, nothing is more frequent. And here God both begins and ends what He saith with them: and assures the Children of Israel, that He will now actually perform what He had promised to their fathers, by saying, "I am Jehovah;" which in effect is the same with, "I am that I am."

I shall instance only in one more of the many perfections signified by these words, and that is, the Eternity of God, which is so plainly contained in them, that the Arabic version renders them by قال له الازلي الذي لا يزول 'I am eternal, that passeth not away:' and so do the Fathers, both Greek and Latin, interpret them. St. John also gives us the same sense of them, where he calls God, ὁ ὤν, ὁ ἦν, καὶ ὁ
Apoc. 1. 4. ἐρχόμενος, 'who is, who was, and who is to come.' For that he intendeth that as a proper name of God, is plain from the original, where the Apostle wishes to the Asian Churches grace and peace, not ἀπὸ τοῦ ὄντος, from Him "who is," but ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁ ὤν, from "Him who is, who was, and who is to come;" that is, from Jehovah, from "I am that I am." But here the Apostle speaks of God's Eternity according to

our capacities, who are apt to apprehend it as past, present, and to come: whereas if we speak of God, as in Himself eternal, He is not measured by time, as our apprehensions of Him are, who are therefore forced to use these words, "before and after, past and to come," to express the several successions of time by. But they are no way applicable properly to Eternity as in itself; for that is always present: and therefore God doth plainly acquaint us here, both with His Eternity, and with the true notion of it, saying, "I am that I am;" that is, I always am, not younger at the beginning, nor older at the end of time, but always one and the same Eternal God. Thus also our blessed Saviour signified His Eternity, by saying, "Before Abraham was, I am." For John 8. 58.
had He been measured by time, as all creatures are, He must have said, "Before Abraham was, I was;" but He saith, "Before Abraham was, I am." And so useth the same expression of Himself, which the Eternal God doth in my text, and so demonstrates Himself to be the same God who here said, "I am that I am."

Having thus offered at something towards the explication of the first of these mysterious sayings, we shall now briefly consider the other, whereby God calls Himself absolutely, "I am." For that it is a proper name, is plain, because though it be a verb of the first person, it is here used as a noun substantive, and the nominative case to another verb of the third person, אֶהְיֶה שְׁלָחַנִי, "I am hath sent me." A strange expression! But when God speaks of Himself, He cannot be confined to grammar rules, being infinitely above and beyond the reach of all languages in the world. And therefore it is no wonder, that when He would reveal Himself, He goes out of our common way of speaking one to another, and expresseth Himself in a way peculiar to Himself, and such as is suitable and proper to His own nature and glory.

Hence therefore, as when He speaks of Himself, and His own eternal essence, He saith, "I am that I am;" so when He speaks of Himself, with reference to His creatures, and especially to His people, He saith, "I am." He doth not say, "I am their friend, their father," or "their protector." He doth not say, "I am their light, their life, their guide,

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their strength," or "tower;" but only "I am." He sets as it were His hand to a blank, that His people may write under it what they please, that is good for them. As if He should say, "Are they weak? I am strength. Are they poor? I am riches. Are they in trouble? I am comfort. Are they sick? I am health. Are they dying? I am life. Have they nothing? I am all things. I am wisdom and power, I am justice and mercy, I am grace and goodness, I am glory, beauty, holiness, eminency, supereminency, perfection, all-sufficiency, eternity, Jehovah, I am. Whatsoever is suitable to their nature, or convenient for them in their several conditions, that I am. Whatsoever is amiable in itself, or desirable unto them, that I am. Whatsoever is pure and holy, whatsoever is great or pleasant, whatsoever is good or needful to make men happy, that I am." So that, in short, God here represents Himself unto us as an universal good, and leaves us to make the application of it to ourselves, according to our several wants, capacities, and desires, by saying only in general, "I AM."

Thus I have given you what light I could into both these expressions, whereby the most High God hath manifested Himself and His glory to us, saying, "I am that I am," and in general, "I am:" in speaking to which, I have been careful to say nothing of Him, but what is warranted by Himself in His Holy Word; as being conscious to myself, that He hath heard every word that I have spoken of Him. And I dare assure you also in His name, that He hath taken notice all along, how every one here present hath been affected with what they have heard concerning Him. And certainly nothing in the world can be more apt or proper to raise our affections, and put us upon steadfast resolutions to serve, honour, and obey God, than such thoughts of Him as I have now endeavoured to suggest to you from those words: which could we always keep fresh in our minds and memories, what excellent persons should we then become! How humble and lowly in our own eyes! How devout and pious towards God! How loyal and submissive to our sovereign! How just and righteous towards all men! And what happy and comfortable lives should we then lead both in this world and the next!

For when we apprehend a being so infinitely above us as Jehovah is, how low and mean, how little and despicable must we needs seem in our own eyes, who in comparison of Him are next to nothing, and may be made so altogether whensoever He pleaseth! And did we always consider the vast distance between Him and us, every time that we approach into His special presence, or pray unto Him, how humbly should we prostrate ourselves before Him! With what reverence and godly fear should we serve and worship Him! And wheresoever we are, did we always apprehend God as present with us, and looking over us, how fearful should we be to offend, how careful to please Him in every thing we think, or speak, or do! For how can we think of so great a God, and not fear Him? of so powerful a God, and not obey Him? How can we think of so immutable a God, and not trust on Him? of so good, so universally good a God, and not desire and love Him with all our hearts and souls? Were our minds always running upon God, nothing doubtless would seem good or lovely, nothing p'easing or desirable, nothing great, or strong, or holy, or any thing, but only He: insomuch that we should account it our only wisdom to know Him, our only freedom to serve Him, our only honour to honour Him, and the only pleasure to please Him, and the only riches we can ever have to enjoy Him.

And besides, they who think upon God aright, must needs, as I have shewn, apprehend Him as the Lord of Hosts, the Universal Monarch of the World, "by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice," and from whom they receive whatsoever authority or power they have to act. And while men thus think of God, how is it possible for them to resist or rebel against their lawful prince? For this would be in effect to fight against God Himself, which they, be sure, who ever think of Him, dare never do: nay, they would be so far from that, that they would not dare to do any ill thing to gain the whole world, for fear of displeasing Him who made and governs it; and therefore must needs take all the care they can to square all their actions according to the strictest rules of justice and equity, that so they may approve themselves to Him. [Prov. 8. 15.]

But who is able to express the happiness of those who are

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always thus thinking upon God? None surely but they who have it. They can tell you, that there is more solid joy and comfort, more real delight and satisfaction of mind, in one single thought of God rightly formed, than all the riches, and honours, and pleasures of this world, put them all together, are able to afford. But how happy then must they needs be, whose thoughts are always fixed upon God! They live above this world, and so are never troubled or disturbed at any thing that happens in it. For whatsoever happens, they are still beholding infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness, ordering and disposing of it; so as to make it turn to God's glory, and their good. And therefore the same things which ruffle and discompose the minds of other men, to them are matter of joy and triumph. By which means they live in Heaven, even whilst they are upon earth, and are always ready and prepared to go thither, where they shall most perfectly and eternally behold, enjoy, and praise Him, who, and who alone can say of Himself, "I AM THAT I AM."

Wherefore, as ever we desire to be truly humble, or holy, or loyal, or just, or happy, we must endeavour all we can to keep our minds continually possessed with such thoughts of God, as have now been put into them; and let us not defer it any longer, but begin it now, while we are in His special presence, speaking and hearing of Him. For which purpose therefore let us call in all our scattered thoughts from all things here below, and raise them up, and unite them all upon the most High God, apprehending Him not under the idea, image, or likeness of any thing else, but as infinitely greater, and higher, and better than all things: as One existing in and of Himself, and giving essence and existence to all things in the world besides Himself: as One so pure and simple, that there is nothing in Him but Himself, but essence and being itself: as One so infinite and omnipotent, that wheresoever any thing else is in the whole world, there He is, and beyond the world, where nothing else is, there all things are, because He is there: as One so wise, so knowing, so omniscient, that He at this very moment, and always, sees what all the Angels are doing in Heaven: what all the fowls are doing in the air; what all the fishes are doing in the

waters; what all the Devils are doing in Hell; what all the men, and beasts, and the very insects are doing upon earth; and what we in particular are now doing here: as One so powerful, so omnipotent, that He can do whatsoever He will only by willing it should be done: as One so great, so good, so glorious, so immutable, so transcendent, so infinite, so incomprehensible, so eternal, what shall I say?—so Jehovah, that the more we think of Him, the more we admire Him, the more we adore Him, the more we love Him, the more we may and ought; our highest conceptions of Him being as much beneath Him, as our greatest services come short of what we owe Him.

Seeing therefore we cannot think of God so highly as He is, let us think of Him as highly as we can: and for that end, let us get above ourselves, and above the world, and raise up our thoughts higher and higher, and higher still; and when we have got them up as high as possibly we can, let us apprehend a Being infinitely higher than the highest of them: and then finding ourselves at a loss, amazed, confounded at such an infinite height of infinite perfections, let us fall down in humble and hearty desires, to be freed from these dark prisons, wherein we are now immured; that we may take our flight into eternity, and by the merits and mediation of the ever-blessed Jesus, mount up to the highest Heavens, and there see this Infinite Being "face to face," [1 Cor. 13. 12.] and enjoy Him for ever.

In the meanwhile, let us of the Church Militant here on earth, join with the Church Triumphant in Heaven, in praising and magnifying His great and glorious name, saying, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, [Rev. 4. 8; Isa. 6. 3.] and is to come." "The whole earth is full of His glory." "Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour and [Rev. 4. 11.] power, for Thou hast created all things, and for Thy pleasure they are, and were created. Amen, Hallelujah; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, to our God, the Great, the All-wise, Almighty, Everlasting God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, one Jehovah, for ever and ever."

SERMON XIV.

THE LOVE OF GOD IN MAN'S SALVATION.

St. John iii. 16.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

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Among the innumerable company of books and writings, which now are extant in the world, there is not one that propounds any certain principle whereon we can trust for the mercy and favour of God, nor by consequence directs us to the way how to obtain true happiness, but only that which we justly call, by way of excellency, "The Scripture given by inspiration of God," for that end and purpose; without which we could never have had any certain knowledge of any thing about it: for no creature could ever think of himself, that the Almighty Creator of all things could ever be reconciled to any of those who have dishonoured and offended Him, by not doing the work, and so not answering the end for which He made them. Much less could any have ever thought of that wonderful way that is revealed and described in the Holy Scripture for the effecting of it, unless it had been first there revealed; which, by the way, is an undeniable argument of its Divine authority, seeing such things are delivered in it, which could never have come into the heart of man, or any creature whatsoever, without being inspired by God Himself.

[2 Tim. 3. 16.]

And as we could never have known any thing of the right way that leads to happiness, unless we had been taught it by the Scripture; so we could never have been certain,

that the way there taught had been the right way, unless that Scripture had been "given by Divine inspiration:" for, not to speak of men only, all creatures in themselves are fallible; it is possible for them to be deceived themselves, or to have a mind to deceive us; and therefore we can never be sure that what they say is true, but have still reason to suspect and doubt of it, whatsoever pretence they make, and what arguments soever they may bring for it. But God, we know, is wisdom and truth itself; it is impossible for Him either to be deceived or deceive: so that His Word is the most certain ground that can be given us to build our faith and hopes upon. And therefore, that we might not be at any uncertainty about the greatest work we have to do in the world, even how to regain the favour of God, and so be happy for ever; He Himself hath been graciously pleased to teach us all things necessary to be known in order to it. This He hath done all along in His Holy Scriptures, both by His Prophets, inspired for that purpose with His Holy Spirit; and also by His only-begotten Son Himself, in many of those Divine oracles that came out of His mouth while He was upon earth; and particularly in this which contains the substance of all the rest, and is so divinely worded, that we cannot say where the emphasis lies; for every word is so weighty and emphatical, that it ought to be carefully weighed and considered, by all that desire fully to understand the sense and meaning of the whole sentence.

The first word, "for," shews that this is brought in as the reason of what went before. Our Lord is here instructing Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews, in the way to life and happiness; and among other things He tells him, that "as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," as whosoever looked upon the brazen serpent, which Moses by God's command set upon a pole in the wilderness, lived notwithstanding he had been bitten by a fiery serpent. And lest this should seem strange to Nicodemus, our Lord here gives him the reason of it, drawn from God's infinite love and goodness to mankind, in sending His Son into the world for that very end: "For God," saith He, "so loved the

Ver. 14, 15.

Num. 21. 9.

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world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God, the Infinite, Almighty, Eternal God, Jehovah, the Lord of Sabaoth, essence itself, existing in and of Himself, and giving existence to all things else; the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of the whole world; who is every where, knows all things, and doth whatsoever He pleaseth in Heaven and earth; the first of all causes, the fountain of all light, the principle of all motion, the centre of all perfections; holiness, wisdom, power, justice, truth, goodness, love itself:—"He so loved the world:" He loved it, He exerted that His Divine perfection, even His love, in a peculiar manner towards it. He had manifested His infinite wisdom, power, and goodness in the creation, or production of all things out of nothing, and in the first settlement of them in their several ranks and orders: and He still continueth to do it, in His preserving, managing, and disposing of all and every one of them. But, in the redemption of mankind, He manifested His love also, or good-will towards them, as His

1 John 4. 9, 10. beloved disciple also observes, saying, "In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love; not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." It was not out of respect to any thing that we could do, whereby to shew our love to Him, or merit His love to us, but out of His own infinite essential love to

Eph. 1. 5. mankind, that He sent His Son to be our Saviour, "according to the good pleasure of His will," as the Apostle speaks.

Deut. 7. 7, 8. As Moses told the children of Israel, "That the Lord did not set His love upon them, nor choose them, because they were more in number than other people, but because the Lord loved them;" so He did not send His Son to redeem mankind from any other motive whatsoever, but because He loved them; because it was the good pleasure of His will to express and manifest this His Divine perfection, His infinite love towards them. All the creatures in the world are His: and there were some other of them who had corrupted themselves, and were fallen from that estate in which

He made them, as well as man. But, howsoever, leaving the other to themselves, He was pleased to pitch upon him as the object upon which to shew His love, in sending His Son to redeem fallen man, and not the fallen angels: "He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham," because He loved the latter, and not the former. Heb. 2. 16.

This is the only fountain of all the favours he vouchsafes to mankind in general, more than to any other creatures. I say to mankind in general; for the blessings which He bestows upon particular men, and upon some more than other, He bestows them only in His Son, for His sake, or upon the account of that propitiation which He made, and whereby He therefore reconciled His Father to them, and merited His love and favour, and all manner of blessings for them. But our Lord here doth not speak of God's love to this or that particular man, but to mankind in general, saying,

"God so loved the world:" the world of men in general, as the word "world" usually signifies in Scripture, and particularly in this place: "The whole world," as St. John expresseth it. The whole species of men; all mankind, from the beginning to the end of the world, whatsoever age or place they lived in; whatsoever estate, condition, degree, quality, or temper they be of, Jew or Gentile, bond or free, high or low, rich or poor, old or young, as they are all equally under the eye of God, He had respect to all in this great expression of His love; "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Adam himself and his whole posterity are guilty before Him: "There is none that doeth good, no not one;" "The whole world lieth in wickedness;" and, therefore, all had equally need of a Saviour. And, accordingly, "God commended His love towards us, in that while we were yet all sinners, Christ died for us;" "He gave Himself a ransom for all;" "He tasted death for every man;" for every one that is of that nature in which He did it: so that every man is equally capable of being saved by Him; God excepts against no man, and therefore men must have a care how they presume to do it: for this is to usurp upon God's prerogative, and to limit His boundless 1 John 2. 2. Rom. 3. 23. Ps. 14. 3. 1 John 5. 19. Rom. 5. 8. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Heb. 2. 9.

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love; to restrain it to some particular persons, when He extended it to all; for He loved the world, the whole sinful world. Yea,

"God so loved the world:" He loved it in such an extraordinary and wonderful manner, that we cannot but admire
1 John 3. 1. and be astonished at it. As the Apostle saith, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." So we may truly say, Behold, what manner of love was this! Who is
Eph. 3. 18. able "to comprehend the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of it?" That the Almighty Creator of all things should love His rebellious creatures! That God should love man!
Ps. 8. 1, 3, 4. sinful man! "O Lord, our Governor, how excellent is Thy name in all the earth! When I consider Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained; what is man that Thou art mindful of him,
Ps. 106. 4. and the son of man that Thou visitest him?" "That Thou visitest Him with Thy salvation?" Who could ever have imagined it? Who could have believed it, if God Himself had not said it? But He Himself hath said it; He hath said, that He loved the world, and not only that He loved it, but that

"He so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son:" His own and only Son, whom He Himself had begotten of Himself, by communicating His own unbegotten essence to Him from all eternity; and so His Eternal Son, "God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father;" whom therefore the Father loveth as Himself: and that all might know He did so, He twice proclaimed it to the world, by a voice
Matt. 3. 17; 17. 5. from Heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And yet, "Hear, ye Heavens, and give ear, O earth; stand amazed and wonder, all ye powers of the world!" The Lord, the most mighty God, the everlasting Father, gave this His only-begotten, His infinitely beloved Son! What a gift was this? What could God Himself give more? What could He give greater? Herein the infiniteness of His love shineth forth as gloriously as His infinite wisdom and power do in the creation and government of the world. And therefore He had no sooner

given this His only-begotten Son to be actually born into the world, but immediately a multitude of the Heavenly host glorified and praised Him for it, singing, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men." Luke 2. 14. What cause then have men themselves to admire and adore this His infinite love and good-will towards them! It was to them He gave His only-begotten Son: He gave Him not to the Angels, who therefore have no advantage by it, but that in it, as in a mirror, they beheld this infinite love in God; which otherwise they could never have seen. But this doubtless is a great addition to the pleasure they take in the vision and fruition of His Divine perfections. How much more should we rejoice, and be pleased with the thoughts of it, that Almighty God, our Maker, hath had such love for us! That He so loved us, His sinful creatures upon earth, that He gave His only-begotten Son for us!

But how did He give Him? He gave Him to take our nature upon Him, to be "made flesh;" such as we are all John 1. 14. made of. He had promised it long before; "And when the Gal. 4. 4, 5. fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." He who made all things at first, was Himself now made of a woman; He was conceived in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, and the power of the Highest overshadowing her. By which means He who was the Son of God from all eternity, then became the Son of Man too: and from that time forward, always was, and ever will be, "Immanuel," God and man in one person.

How this should be, it is not for any of us to inquire, who know not how our own soul and body are linked together, so as to make one man; what horrid presumption then would it be in us to inquire how God and man are so united as to make one Christ? It is sufficient for us to know, that it is done by Him to whom "all things are possible," and [Matt. 19. 26; Tit. 1. 2.] revealed by Him "who cannot lie." And therefore revealed by Him, that we might believe it upon His word, and accordingly admire and adore Him for it: which we could not do, if it was not more than what we ourselves are able to

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comprehend; for then it would not be an act of infinite wisdom, power, and love, as this be sure was; in that God was pleased to manifest His infinite inestimable love in such a way as could never be found out but by His infinite wisdom, nor brought about without His infinite power, even by giving His only-begotten Son to be made and born of a woman.

And as He thus gave Him to be born of a woman, when He was so born, He gave Him to converse with men, to exert His infinite power visibly before their eyes, and instruct them in all things necessary for them to believe and do, that they may be eternally happy. Which is another incomprehensible instance of His infinite love; for hereby we know His Divine will and pleasure, not only by an Angel, a Prophet, or Apostle, but immediately from Himself, from His own mouth. This the Apostle takes special notice of, saying, "God, who at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in time past to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son." By His Son, who being God as well as man, whatsoever He said was spoken by God Himself, and so was most properly an oracle, the very Word of God: and therefore ought to be observed, believed, and valued above all the words that were ever spoken in the world besides. Neither can we ever sufficiently admire the love of God in this particular, that He gave His only-begotten Son Himself to reveal and make known His will unto the world, and so to assure us of it in the highest manner that was possible.

Heb. 1. 1, 2.

And yet this is not all neither, "for God so loved the world," that when He had thus given His only-begotten Son to be made flesh, and dwell some time among us; He afterwards gave Him to be a sacrifice for the sins of the world: "He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all." "He delivered Him up to death, even the death of the cross; so that His ownself bare our sins in His own body on the tree." This is that which is more especially aimed at in this place. Where it is said, "That as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up," and so He was; He was lifted up upon the cross, as the serpent was upon the pole. "There

Rom. 8. 32.

1 Pet. 2. 24.

Ver. 14.

Eph. 5. 2.

He gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet-smelling savour." "He gave Himself a ransom for all." "And was made a propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Where we may likewise observe, that as God the Father gave His Son, so God the Son is also said to give Himself; but still it was the same God that did it. For He, as God, gave Himself as man: He gave that flesh which He had assumed, to suffer death upon the cross, and so offered it up, as a whole burnt-offering, to make satisfaction, atonement, and reconciliation for the sins of the world: "And so hath put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." As He well might, seeing His death, being the death of one who was God as well as man, was infinitely more than the death of all the men in the world; and therefore might justly be accepted of, instead of theirs. And so it actually is in the sight of God, for all those who believe in Him; insomuch that their sins are not only pardoned, but they themselves are thereby justified, or accounted righteous before Him, the most righteous judge of the whole world.

1 Tim. 2. 6.
1 John 2. 2.
Heb. 9. 26.

For which purpose, we must further observe, that God having thus given His Son to be a sacrifice for the sin of the world, He then "gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body." For that, and all the sound members of it, even all that truly believe in Him, He is now exalted at the right hand of God, and there continually maketh intercession for them. By means whereof, they are justified before God, through His merits imputed to them; they are washed from their sins in His blood, they are sanctified by His Holy Spirit, they are made the children of God by adoption and grace, and are therefore kept by His almighty power through faith unto salvation. For He is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Eph. 1. 22, 23.
Heb. 7. 25.

Thus therefore it was, that God gave His only-begotten Son; but wherefore did He give Him? He gave Him, "that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is here affirmed by the Son Himself, who was given, and who certainly knew wherefore

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He was so given; and therefore we may be confident, that every tittle of what He here saith, is infallibly true and certain. But He here saith, that "whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish;" without excepting against any person whatsoever, that no man may except himself or any other, but that all might be encouraged and excited to believe in Him, and be fully assured that if they do so, they shall be saved by Him; for He Himself here saith, they shall: they have His word for it, and that too not only in this, but many other places. For St. Paul observes, the Scripture saith, "Whosoever believeth on Him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all, is rich unto all that call upon Him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved." And He Himself elsewhere saith, "Him that cometh to Me, I will in no wise cast out." Him, whomsoever he be, whensoever, wheresoever, howsoever he hath lived, if he doth but come to Christ; Christ Himself saith, "He will in no wise reject or cast him out." And what can any man desire more than the Word of Christ, the Word of God, the Word of Truth itself for it? And if this had not been so positively asserted, yet the whole design of Christ's incarnation and passion, as it is revealed in the Holy Scriptures, plainly demonstrates the same thing: for it appears from my text itself, that it was not out of love to any particular persons only, but to the world, or all mankind, that "God gave His only-begotten Son." And when He was given, He did not take upon Him the nature only of some particular men, but the nature of man in general. Neither did He "taste death" only for this or that man, but for "every man." And therefore every one that is part of that world which God loved, and is of that nature which Christ assumed, and in which He tasted death, must needs be so far interested in Him, as to be capable of being saved by Him, and shall certainly be so, if he believe in Him: I say, if he "believeth in Him;" for that is the condition upon which the salvation of every man depends: as our Saviour Himself here assures us, saying, "That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish:" that is, whosoever is so fully persuaded of the truth and certainty of all that is revealed in the Holy Scripture

Rom. 10. 11, 12, 13; Isa. 28. 16; Joel 2. 32.

John 6. 37.

Heb. 2. 9.

concerning Jesus Christ, that he verily believes Him to be the only-begotten Son of God, and the only Saviour of mankind, and accordingly puts His whole trust and confidence in Him, for all things requisite to His salvation; for grace, to repent truly of all his former sins; for power, "to deny [Tit. 2. 12.] ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world;" for the mercy of God in the pardon of whatsoever he hath hitherto done amiss; for God's acceptance of his sincere endeavours to serve Him for the future; for His continual direction and assistance of him in the doing it; and for whatsoever else is necessary to his being made a child of God, admitted into the number of His saints and servants, received into and always preserved in His love and favour, so as to be "meet [Col. 1. 12.] to be a partaker of the inheritance of the Saints in light;" and all through the merits of that death which Jesus Christ once suffered upon earth, and by means of that intercession which He, by virtue of His said death, is continually making at the right hand of God in Heaven: "Whosoever" thus "believeth in the Son of God, shall not perish," as they shall who do not believe in Him; as appears from these very words uttered by Himself, who best knew who shall and who shall not be saved by Him.

For seeing that although God "so loved the world," that "He gave His only-begotten Son to be their Saviour," yet He gave Him not that all should be saved by Him, whether they do or do not believe in Him, but only that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish;" it is plain, that all who do not believe in Him must inevitably perish, notwithstanding all that He hath, or they themselves can ever do to prevent it. For as "there is none other Name under [Acts 4. 12.] Heaven given among men, whereby they must be saved," so there is no way possible for them to be saved by Him, without believing in Him: if there was, He Himself would never have said only, that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish;" for hereby He plainly excludes all others from all hopes of being ever saved from perishing. And that all may take special notice of it, and not flatter themselves with any such hopes, in the next verse but one He saith in express terms, "He that believeth on Him is [Ver. 18.]

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not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only-begotten Son of God." And elsewhere, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned."

Mark 16. 16.

In these and many such places of His Holy Gospel, we are fully assured by Him, who alone can save men from perishing, that He will save none but only such as believe in Him: and therefore we must not give ear to such as have the impudence to assert, that a man may be saved in any religion, if he doth but live up to what he professeth, whether he believes in Christ or no: for this is to hearken unto men rather than unto God, who hath asserted the contrary in as plain terms as could be invented; that having it from His own mouth, we may be fully persuaded and satisfied in our own minds, that none shall ever be saved, but such as believe in Him, but that all others shall perish; that is, they shall be all destroyed, "both soul and body, in Hell."

Matt. 10. 28.

2 Thess. 1. 7, 8, 9, 10.

"When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven, with His mighty Angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power; when He shall come to be glorified in His Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe." "In all them that believe," He shall be admired and glorified, for they shall be all delivered by Him from the wrath to come: but they who believed not, shall be condemned to that "everlasting fire which is prepared for the Devil and his angels," to which all that are condemned, are therefore said to have their "portion appointed them with the unbelievers."

Matt. 25. 41. Luke 12. 46.

But they who believe in the Son of God, shall not only be preserved from perishing together with the unbelievers, but they shall have everlasting life; they shall all have it, how many soever they be: they may be sure of it, forasmuch as it was for this very end and purpose that "God gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life;" that is, as the phrase signifies in Holy Scripture, they shall live

in the full enjoyment of all things that can make their life easy, pleasant, and happy, not only for some time, but to all eternity. "For He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" His Son, begotten of Himself from all eternity, was of infinite more worth, and infinitely dearer to Him, than all things that He hath made; and therefore having given Him, we cannot doubt, but that together with Him, He gives all things else to those who believe in Him. As He gave Him to be "Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body;" so in Him He gives all things to those who are real members of His said body, such as all true believers are. Hence it is that "all things work together for their good." "For all things are theirs, whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the World, or Life, or Death, or things present, or things to come; all are theirs: and they are Christ's, and Christ is God's." Christ being the Son of God, who made all things, and they the members of Christ, by whom all things were made; therefore all things in Him are theirs, so as to contribute every thing, in its way, to perfect and complete their happiness.

Rom. 8. 32. Eph. 1. 22, 23. Rom. 8. 28. 1 Cor. 3. 21, 22, 23.

This I know is a thing that is seldom thought of; but if it was rightly understood and considered, it would conduce much to clear up our apprehensions of that happy estate, which they are in who believe in Christ: and therefore I shall illustrate or explain it a little farther, from the nature and consequence of that Adoption which they have by Him, as it is revealed to us in His Holy Word. Where we find, "That as many as received Him, to them He gave power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name." And that they who are sons or children, are likewise heirs, "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." Not such as we call co-heirs, who have the inheritance divided and parted among them; but joint-heirs, so that every one hath the whole inheritance settled upon him, that he may enjoy it all, as much as if none had any interest in it but himself. Thus all true believers, being the children of God, they are joint-heirs with Christ; "but Christ is appointed Heir of all things;" for "the Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into His hand." And the

John 1. 12. Rom. 8. 17. Heb. 1. 2. John 3. 35; 13. 3.

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Son Himself also saith, "All things that the Father hath
John 16. 15. are Mine." Wherefore they who believe in Him, being joint-heirs with Him, they also must needs be heirs of all things in their capacities, as He is. But howsoever, lest any should doubt how this can be, He Himself assures them
Rev. 21. 7. of it with His own mouth, saying, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things, and I will be his God, and he shall be My son." He speaks not of all in general, but of every one in particular, "he that overcometh," as every true be-
1 John 5. 5. liever doth: and none but such, "For who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" Every one therefore who believeth, and therefore overcometh, shall inherit all things, as certainly as God's Word is true, for He Himself hath said it: and that too, not only in this place, but likewise, when speaking of a faithful and wise steward, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in
Luke 12. 43, 44. due season, he saith, "Blessed is that servant, whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing: of a truth I say unto you, that he will make him ruler over all that he hath."

And certainly such a one must needs be blessed, who hath all things that God hath to make him so; every thing, some way or other, affording him matter of joy and thankfulness to Him that made it. So that if he looks no farther than the creatures, the innumerable company of creatures of all kinds, that are now under his dominion and power, he can see no end of his felicity: for which way soever he casts his eye, it brings him in fresh matter to rejoice and solace himself in. Here he sees one instance, and there another, of God's infinite wisdom; this thing shews His power one way, that another: some creatures set forth His justice, some His mercy, and all His goodness. By which means he takes infinite delight and pleasure in all the Work of God, as well as in His Divine love and favour in granting him such a full enjoyment of them, that he actually possesseth all the comfort that any thing in the world can minister unto him.

This, one would think, is enough for any man to have, whereon to live happily and comfortably in the other world;

especially seeing he shall ever have it. And yet all this is nothing in comparison of what every one that believes in Christ, shall enjoy for ever. For that everlasting life which he shall have, consists not only in the possession of all things that God hath made, but likewise in the enjoyment of Him that made them, and of those infinite perfections which He displayed in the making of them. For as all such will certainly go to Heaven, they will there see and so enjoy Almighty God the chiefest Good, in Himself, in His own essence, as well as in His works; and that too, as fully and perfectly, as it is possible for finite creatures to behold an infinite Being, unveiling Himself and displaying His glory before them. "For now we see," saith the Apostle, "but as through a glass darkly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known." To the same purpose is that of the beloved Disciple; "Beloved, now we are the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." This we know in general, but in our present imperfect state we are not able to conceive, much less to express the greatness of this transcendent happiness and glory: and therefore I shall say no more at present of it, but that it is certainly the greatest that any creatures are capable of; and that all they whose hearts are purified by faith in Christ, shall as certainly have and enjoy it for ever; according to that Divine Oracle that came from our Saviour's own mouth, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

1 Cor. 13. 12.

1 John 3. 2.

Matt. 5. 8.

This therefore is that everlasting life, which all that truly believe in Christ shall have; I speak it confidently, as I well may, having His own Word for it, "That God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." And it is well He Himself hath said it, otherwise who could have believed, that men, sinful men, who have so often and so highly offended Almighty God, should, notwithstanding, be reconciled to Him; yea, so fully reconciled to Him, as to be admitted into the number of His own children, made equal to His Holy Angels, advanced to His

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Kingdom in Heaven, and there having everlasting life? Who could have thought it, who could have believed it, if God Himself had not said it? But He having said it, we have as much, nay, more cause to believe it, than we have to believe that there is a sun in the firmament, or that we ourselves are now in this place. And it highly concerns us all, never to doubt of it, but firmly to believe it upon His Word: otherwise we shall be never the better, but far the worse for it: not to believe what He saith, being the greatest offence and affront to His Divine glory, that we can possibly be guilty of. It is giving Truth itself the lie: for as St.

1 John 5. 10. John observes, "He that believeth not God, hath made Him a liar." And then it is no wonder, that they who do not believe in His only-begotten Son, according to the testimony of which God hath given of Him, shall perish everlastingly: but "whosoever believeth in Him," as He Himself here saith, "shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

Luke 18. 8. But what doth He Himself say? "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" If He should come now, I fear He would find but little: for although there be much talk of faith among us, and many who profess to believe, there are but few who do it. They who are born and bred where the faith of Christ is professed, they commonly profess it too, at least they do not deny any of the fundamental articles of the Christian religion: they own that Jesus Christ is the only-begotten Son of God, the only Saviour of the World; that He for that purpose became man, and died and rose again, and went up to Heaven, and the like: and because they acknowledge these great articles of our faith in general, concerning Him, to be true, they take it for granted that they believe in Him, without troubling their heads any more about it. Whereas, this is only to believe as the Church believes, which is the great fault we justly blame the Papists for; but it is too common among ourselves. But this is so far from that which the Scripture calls believing in Christ; that they who go no farther, can never be saved by Him, no more than as if they did not believe at all; as in truth they do not.

Rom. 10. 10. "For it is with the heart that man believeth unto righte-

ousness." Whatsoever he professeth with his mouth, unless his heart be possessed with a firm belief and full persuasion of the great truths revealed in the Gospel, he hath not that faith to which righteousness and salvation are there promised. But he who really believeth in his heart all that is there revealed concerning the only-begotten Son of God, and the promises which are made in Him; such a one cannot but live with a constant dependence and trust on Him, not only for his salvation in general, but for every thing which is there required, as necessary to his obtaining of it; for grace to repent and turn to God, so as to love, and fear, and serve Him faithfully in this world, as well as for pardon, and peace, and glory in the next. And whosoever thus "believeth in Christ," hath His infallible Word for it, that "he shall not perish, but have everlasting life."

God grant therefore that all here present may thus believe in Christ: we should then as certainly live together in Heaven, as we are now met together in this place: but for that purpose, we must take more pains about it than men commonly do. I know that "faith is the gift of God." And Eph. 2. 8.
that He is ready to give it to all, in the use of the means which He hath ordained for it: but for that end we must use them heartily, devoutly and constantly, never leaving till we have attained it. Saying our prayers a little now and then, and coming to Church when you have nothing else to do, will never do the business: but if you desire in good earnest to believe in Christ, so as to be saved by Him, ye must in good earnest exercise yourselves continually, in meditating upon the infallible grounds you have to believe all that is revealed in God's Word; in hearkening diligently to it, when it is repeated or expounded; in praying earnestly to God to help your unbelief, and to increase your faith; and in receiving the Holy Sacrament, that was ordained on purpose to exercise and confirm your faith in Christ. This is the way to believe in the only-begotten Son indeed; and if ye do that, I speak in His Name, ye "shall not perish, but have everlasting life." In His Name therefore, and for His sake, as well as your own, I advise and beseech you all to do so; set yourselves earnestly upon the the use of the means of grace, that by the grace of God

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co-operating with them, you may live for the future with a firm belief in Christ your Saviour. Ye will then find by your own experience the truth of all that ye have now heard; for He will then "purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God." "He will purify you to Himself, a peculiar people zealous of good works." He will absolve you from all your sins, and justify you before His Father. He will protect you from all evil, and give you whatsoever is good for you. Above all, He will prepare a place in Heaven for you; that when you go out of this wicked world, you may live with Him, who liveth with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever.

[Heb. 9. 14.]

[Tit. 2. 14.]

SERMON XV.

THE MERITS OF CHRIST'S PASSION.

St. John i. 29.

Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the Sin of the World!

This, before Easter, as it anciently was, so it may be still very properly called, "The Great Week," because in it we commemorate the great mystery in our religion, the death of Christ, the death which the Son of God suffered for our sins; which is so great, so exceeding great a mystery, that were we but truly sensible of it, how should we be amazed and confounded at it? How should we abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes, that ever we should be the cause that the Son of God should die? That the Son of God should die! Methinks the very naming of it is enough to strike us dead, or at least to overwhelm us with so much grief and sorrow, as to wish we had never lived.

But alas! how far are we from that! We can think and talk of Christ's dying for our sins, and yet live in them: we can hear of His being accused and condemned, and yet not condemn, nor so much as accuse ourselves for them: we can read over the whole history of our Saviour's Passion with dry eyes, and be no more troubled at it, than as if we had been no way concerned in it. Which certainly can be imputed to nothing else but to the want of a due sense either of the Person that suffered for our sins, or else of the sins for which He suffered. For did we clearly apprehend, and firmly believe these things, it would be impossible for us not to be affected with them more than with any thing, more than with all things in the world besides. For what

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are the sufferings of all the creatures in the world, in comparison of His that made them? But that He that made us should not only suffer, but that He should suffer for us, and for our sins against Himself, is so great a wonder, that nothing can pretend to come into competition with it, except it be that we, after all, should not be affected with it.

Wherefore, that we may not in this respect be the greatest prodigies in nature, it will be necessary sometimes to contemplate upon what our Blessed Saviour underwent for us. And it may not be amiss if we do it now: now that we have so fit an opportunity for it, this being the time which the Church hath always set apart for that purpose, and this is the day which is appointed for public humiliation and prayer over the whole kingdom: for nothing can conduce more to the humbling us thoroughly for our sins, and to the confirming our faith in God, for His granting the blessings we pray for, than duly to consider what His only-begotten Son hath suffered, and what He hath thereby merited for us.

Let us therefore gather up all our scattered thoughts from all things else, and fix them awhile upon the cross of Christ; and then see whether we can forbear to sympathize with Him; and whether it be possible to keep our passions from moving according to their respective capacities, in some degree suitably to those He suffered for us. And how happy should I think myself, if I could contribute any thing towards so good a work! if I could so represent Christ's sufferings for our sins, that we may all, this day, be truly humbled for them, and for the future both forsake and abhor them!

But this is an happiness which I have little ground to expect; for the subject is so sublime and great, that I can neither fully conceive what I ought to express, nor express what I myself conceive of it. I cannot so much as begin to think of the Son of God, His dying for my sins, but I am presently in amaze, my head turns round, my whole soul is seized with horror and confusion at it. But when I think of venting these my confused thoughts to others, I am still at a greater loss for words wherewith to do it; insomuch that I should not offer at any thing towards it, but that I hope you are all so disposed as to be ready to receive and im-

prove every little hint and intimation that I shall give you of it, from these words of St. John the Baptist, who seeing Jesus coming towards him, cried out, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

In which remarkable saying of the Baptist, every word hath its weight and emphasis; and therefore I shall first run through them all, by the way of paraphrase, but very briefly, lest I should be prevented in what, by God's assistance, I principally design.

First, saith He, "Behold," see here the person I told you of, the Lamb without spot and blemish, the perfect emblem of innocence and patience; "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world;" the Lamb typified by that which you sacrifice every morning and evening, and especially by the Paschal Lamb, which was roasted in such a posture (as Justin Martyr and others observe) that it exactly represented a person hanging upon a cross. Yea, "Behold the Lamb of God," a Lamb not of an earthly, but Divine extraction, the Lamb of God's own choosing and appointment; the Lamb of God's own eternal generation, the only-begotten of the Father; the Lamb offered up by God Himself, unto Himself. And so, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away sin;" not that expiates or covers it, but takes it quite away; not that hath or will take it away, but, as St. Chrysostom observes, that doth take it away continually; and that taketh away not only some particular sins, but sin in general, sin as sin: and so, whatsoever there is in sin, that either offends God, or can hurt us; the strength as well as the guilt of sin, our inclinations to it, as well as our obligations to punishment for it: and that taketh away the sin not only of some particular persons, but the sin of the world; the sin not only of Abraham's, but Adam's posterity; the sin of the Gentiles as well as of the Jews; for He is a "Propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." Thus whensoever we see Christ, either with the eye of sense or faith, we may cry out with the Baptist, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

[Rev.13.8.]

[Justin. Mart. in Dialog. c. Tryphone, p. 259. c. Ed. Colon. 1686.]

[Chrys. Homil. 17. in S. Joan. cap. 1.]

1 John 2. 2.

The words being thus explained, it is easy to observe, that they have a peculiar reference to our Saviour's Passion,

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as that whereby He taketh away the sin of the world: and therefore I shall look upon them only under that respect, and so take occasion from them to consider, what thoughts should come into our minds, and how our affections should be moved at each remembrance of our Saviour's hanging upon the cross, and there dying for our sins; for which purpose, the main thing required is to get our minds possessed with as clear a notion, and as deep a sense as possibly we can, of that death which Christ suffered for us: for when this is once done, we shall soon find in ourselves what influence and effect it will have upon our passions.

Now, in order to the forming in our minds a true idea and conception of our Lord's death and crucifixion, it is no way necessary to use any material or visible representations of it, as they commonly do in the Church of Rome, to the great scandal and reproach of the Christian religion: but rather, it is necessary that we do not use them. Forasmuch as such sensible objects are apt to keep our minds fixed and terminated upon themselves; and at the best, they can represent no more than a man's body hanging upon a cross, which contributes nothing towards our apprehending aright the Son of God's dying there for the sins of men, but rather impedes and hinders it. But the best means we can make use of for this purpose, is actually and firmly to believe whatsoever is revealed and recorded concerning our Saviour's passion, in His Holy Gospel, with such a faith as is due to truths attested by God Himself; which, as the Apostle saith,

Heb. 11. 1. "is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." For such a faith causing the things which we believe, to subsist thus, not only before our eyes, but in our very hearts; it fills the soul not only with high notions and speculations, but, in a manner, with the very substance of the things themselves.

And there are four things, especially, which we ought thus to believe, concerning the sufferings of the Son of God for our sins; that they were real and great sufferings; that they were the sufferings of the Son of God; that they were for sin in general, and for our sins in particular.

First, therefore, let us recollect what we have all read and heard, and know, and believe concerning what Jesus Christ

once suffered on the cross at Hierusalem, and imagine that we see it now, not only represented, but really acted before our eyes, so as to be able to say, "Behold," yonder, "the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world!" Behold Him, after many preliminary affronts and abuses put upon Him, haled at length to Mount Calvary, the place of His execution! Behold there an upright piece of timber fixed in the ground, with another little piece jetting out about the middle, and a cross-beam towards the top of it! Behold the body of the Blessed Jesus, raised up and seated upon the foresaid middle-piece, His feet nailed one over the other, towards the bottom, and His hands one to the one side, and the other to the other side of the cross-beam! Behold Him hanging in this sad, this ignominious, this painful posture, for three long hours together! Behold how the blood trickles down out of the orifices which the nails have made in His hands and feet! How fast doth it fall to the ground, as if all the blood in His body was striving to get out there! And that which is forced to stay behind, how doth it ferment and boil in His veins and arteries, and swell and stretch them to that height, as to make them ready to burst asunder! What pain, what torment is He now in, all over from head to foot! But what! is there nobody to pity and relieve Him in this distress? So far from that, that when His excessive heat hath made Him thirsty, behold! the standers-by will give Him nothing else but "gall and vinegar to drink:" a sad cordial for a dying man! But will not Almighty God, whom He so truly called "Father," will not He come in to rescue or assist Him? Alas! there is the source of all His pain and misery; for His Father, who once and again had said in the hearing of men, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" His Father Himself is now so angry and displeased, that He seems utterly to have forsaken Him. This is that which racks and tortures His soul, infinitely more than all the nails afflict His body: insomuch, that in the midst of all his pain, He is forced to cry out, in a most sad and doleful manner, (methinks I hear it still), "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" And now "Behold the Lamb of God" roasting in the fire of His Father's wrath, and offering up

[Matt.3.17; 17.5.]

[Matt. 27. 46.]

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Himself as a whole burnt-offering to Him, until at length, being no longer able to endure the flames, He "gives up the Ghost."

[Matt. 27. 50.]

But then, in the next place, let us consider, who it was that underwent all this. Who? No other, no less a person than the Eternal Son of God, of the same nature and glory with the Father: for when they crucified Him, "They cru-

1 Cor. 2. 8.

cified the Lord of Glory," as the Apostle saith. The blood we saw upon His hands and feet, and dropping down so fast from thence unto the ground, "it was the blood of God:" for so the same Apostle calls it, in the charge he gave to the

Acts 20. 28.

Asian Bishops, requiring them "to feed the Church of God, which He," which God "hath purchased with His own blood." Nay, when He died, God Himself may be truly said to have laid down His life, for so His own beloved

1 John 3. 16.

Disciple saith expressly, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us." Strange expressions! Yet not so strange as true, as being uttered by Truth itself. Neither will they seem strange unto us, if we truly believe and consider, that He who suffered all this, was, and is both God and man; not in two distinct persons, as if He was one person as God, and another person as man, according to the Nestorian heresy; for if so, then His sufferings as man would have been of no value for us, nor have stood us in any stead, as being the sufferings only of a finite person: but He is both God and man in one and the same Person, as the third general Council declared out of the Holy Scriptures, and the Catholic Church always believed. From whence it comes to pass, that although His sufferings affected only the manhood, yet that being at the same time united to the Godhead, in one and the same Person, they therefore were, and may be properly called the sufferings of God Himself; the Person that suffered them being really and truly God.

But why should He who is God Himself suffer? Was it for Himself, upon His own account, for His own sin? No,

[1 Pet. 2. 22.]

surely; "For He did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth:" and He who never sinned Himself, could never suffer for Himself. But why did He then suffer? The

Isa. 53. 4-6.

Prophet resolves the question, saying, "That He bare our

griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities. The Lord laid on Him the iniquities of us all," or, as the word signifies, "made all our iniquities meet on Him." And therefore His Apostles say, "He died for our sins," "He was delivered for our offences," "He was made sin for us," "He gave Himself for us," "He laid down His life for us;" "He was made a ransom for us all," "He was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world:" or, as He Himself words it, "The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many;" or "instead of many," even as many as partake of that nature which He assumed, and in which He suffered. [Rom.4.25; 2 Cor. 5.21; Gal. 2. 20; Tit. 2. 14; 1 Tim. 2. 6; 1 John 2.2.] Matt.20.28.

For seeing He took not on Him any particular human person or persons, but the human nature in general, which had no subsistence out of the Divine Person; hence all that are of that nature were virtually contained in Him the second, as well as they were in the first "Adam;" and therefore also suffered with Him, because their nature did so, in His Divine Person, to which it was united: by which means He, "By the one oblation of Himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." So that whensoever we look upon our Saviour, as hanging upon the cross, we may truly say, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!"

Neither is it enough that we thus believe, that Christ died for mankind in general, but in the last place, every one should believe that Christ died for him, and for his sins in particular; so as to apply the sufferings of the human nature in Christ to his own particular human person. For seeing it is expressly said that Christ tasted death for "every man," every man ought to believe He did it for him. And as no man can believe this except he repent, so no man can truly repent of all his sins, but he may and ought to believe this, even that Christ died for him, and for those very sins which he hath repented of. Thus we find St. Paul acting his faith, so as to appropriate Christ unto himself: "I am crucified," saith he, "with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in Heb. 2. 9. Gal. 2. 20.

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the flesh, I live by the Faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me."

Thus every one that repents and believes the Gospel, should look upon himself as particularly interested in what Christ did and suffered for mankind, as much as if He had done and suffered it only for him; so that I am bound, and so is every one else, not only to "confess with my mouth," but "to believe in my heart," that He became the Son of Man, that I might become the son of God: He assumed my human, that I might partake of His Divine nature. He was "delivered for my offences," and "raised again for my justification:" He was "made sin for me," that "I might be made the righteousness of God in Him:" He died that I might live, and was crucified by men, that I might be glorified with God for ever; for "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." And therefore now that I remember His death, and see Him, methinks, upon the cross, I cannot but cry out, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" in general, and my sins in particular!

[Rom. 10. 9.]

[Rom. 4. 25.]

[2 Cor. 5. 21.]

[Gal. 2. 20.]

Now let us put these things together, that Jesus Christ suffered death, even the death of the cross; that He who suffered that death, was not only man, but God; that He suffered it only, that He might thereby expiate and take away the sins which mankind in general, and which we in particular, have committed: And if we rightly believe, and duly consider these great Articles of our Christian Faith, we need not be told what impressions they will make upon our minds; for we ourselves shall soon find it by our own experience. Yet nevertheless, this being the proper work of the season, to raise up and exercise our souls in some measure suitably to the mystery which we now celebrate, I shall endeavour, as plainly as I can, to shew how the several passions or affections of our minds should be moved, excited, and stirred up at the remembrance and consideration of Christ's dying for us; not doubting but you will excuse my plainness, for His sake of whom I speak, and of whom we can never speak plain enough.

For this purpose therefore, I shall begin with the passion of *anger* and *hatred:* I join them together, because of their near alliance to one another; *anger* being nothing, in a

manner, but *hatred* in the act; *hatred* nothing but habitual *anger*. And doubtless, if ever it be lawful to hate, if ever it be a duty to be angry, it must needs be so when we think of our Saviour's Passion, and of those which had a hand in it. Our Saviour's Passion! Who is able to think of it without utter hatred and indignation against those who caused it? How odious to all good men is the memory of those who brought King Charles I. unto the block! But what then shall we think of those who brought the King of all kings unto the cross? What shall we think of Judas, who betrayed Him? of the officers who apprehended Him? of the chief Priest and elders who accused Him? What shall we think of the rabble, who preferred a murderer before Him, and cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him?" What shall we think of Pilate, who pronounced sentence upon Him? and of the soldiers, who put a crown of thorns upon His head, who stripped Him, who mocked Him, who spit upon Him, who smote Him upon the head, who fastened His blessed hands and feet unto the cross, with nails drove through them? What shall we think, I say, of these? These certainly are far more odious to all good Christians, than we can think them to be. Or rather, with what patience are we able to think of them at all? O generation of vipers! Who could ever have imagined, that men created after the image of God, could have had such venom and poison, such rancour and malice, so much of the spirit of the Devil in them, as to sell their Redeemer, accuse their Advocate, condemn their Judge, destroy their Saviour, kill Him that gave them life, and so do all the mischief they could to Him, who did all the good that could be done for them? If we had them here, how would our hearts rise against them! Which of us could forbear to express the utmost of his hatred and abhorrence of them? How should we all strive to serve them, if possible, as bad as they served our Saviour!

But we must not spend all our wrath and fury upon them, but remember that we ourselves had also a great hand in that horrid fact. They indeed were the instruments, but the sins of men, and ours among the rest, were the principal causes of it: the consideration whereof is enough, one would

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think, to make us out of love with sin as long as we live, and to hate it with a perfect hatred, and ourselves also for the commission of it. Which that we may do, let us search into our hearts, review our lives, and bethink ourselves what sins we have committed against the Eternal God; and remember these were they which put our Saviour to so much grief and pain, into such an agony, that He sweat drops, great drops of blood. These were they, for which He was delivered up into the hands of His malicious enemies, and was so cruelly used and abused by them. These were they, which incensed the wrath of God so much, that He Himself could no way quench it, but with His own blood. In short, these were they, for which the Son of God Himself was betrayed, apprehended, derided, accused, arraigned, condemned, and crucified. Can we remember this, and yet endure ourselves, and our sins too? Surely it is impossible! If there be any such thing as gall in us, it must needs overflow and vent itself against ourselves and sins, when we remember what shame and misery we thereby brought upon the best friend that ever we had, or ever can have in the whole world. Ungrateful creatures! that ever we should put the Son of God to all this trouble, and bring Him with so much grief and sorrow to His grave! That ever we should offend Almighty God so much, that nothing but the blood of His only-begotten Son should appease and reconcile Him to us!

But what! shall we still live in sin, notwithstanding that our Lord hath died for it, and so crucify to ourselves the
[Heb. 6. 6.] "Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame? God forbid." No: let us now revenge our Saviour's death upon our sins, which caused it, and kill them as they killed Him,
[Gal. 5. 24.] even "crucify our flesh with the affections and lusts." Let us now live in a perfect aversion and antipathy to all manner of vice and wickedness, and set ourselves so much against it, that all the world may see our love to Christ, who died for our sins, by our constant hatred of those sins for which He died.

And now we speak of love, that certainly is a passion that must needs be raised to its highest pitch, when we "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of

the world." If we behold Him only as the Lamb of God, as such He is without spot or blemish; beauty, goodness, purity, glory, perfection itself; and, therefore, infinitely deserves our love, for what He is: but when we behold Him as the "Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," and so consider not only how lovely He is in Himself, but likewise how loving He hath been, and still is to us; I wonder how we are able to love any thing in the world besides, or at least in comparison of Him! For where shall we find a friend that ever did, or ever can express so much love and kindness to us, as our dear Lord hath done? For what hath not He done? What hath not He suffered for us? He "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, and yet made Himself of no reputation, but took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient to death, even to the death of the cross," and all for us. And as He Himself saith, "Greater love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life for his friend." Yet this love had He for us, for hereby "perceive the love of God, that He laid down His life for us." He did not only suffer hunger and thirst, and contempt, and grief, and pain, and trouble for us, but He laid down His life for us. "O the height, the length, the depth, the breadth of the love of Christ to mankind!" That Glory itself should be despised, Mercy slighted, Love hated, Innocence accused, Justice condemned, Life die, God crucified for men! How can we muse of this, and the fire not kindle in our breasts, and break out into an open flame of Divine love to Him, who so "loved us," as to give "Himself for us."

Phil. 2. 6-8.

John 15. 13.

1 John 3. 16.

[Eph. 3. 18.]

[Gal. 2. 20.]

And if any of your hearts be not yet enflamed with true love to Christ, bring them nearer to His cross, behold Him there how He hangs upon it, view Him well, see how His heart beats, His head hangs down, His hands and feet are all of a gore-blood, and all for you! Consider how His body is racked, His soul is scorched, His whole man is tormented in the fire of God's wrath, and all for you! Look a little longer, and behold what pangs of death are upon Him, until at length He bows His head, and gives up the Ghost,

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and all for you! And if after all this, any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be *Anathema Maranatha!*

Neither doth our Blessed Saviour thus infinitely deserve our love, only by what He once suffered upon the cross, but likewise by what He is still doing for us in Heaven; where He appears continually in the presence of God on our behalf, applying the merits of that death to us, which He underwent for us upon earth. For it is to Him thus dying, and therefore making intercession for us, that we are obliged for whatsoever we have, or are, or do, that is good: it is He that supplies our wants, that resolves our doubts, that prevents our fears, that removes our troubles, and delivers us from seen or unseen dangers, every day: it is He that restrains the power, "abates the pride, assuages the malice," infatuates the counsels, and defeats the designs of all our enemies: it is by Him that our vices are subdued, and our hearts cleansed, that our sins are forgiven, and our persons justified; that our prayers are answered, our services accepted, our nature sanctified, and our souls saved: it is all by Him, and by Him only. He is our Prophet to instruct and teach us, He is our King to govern and protect us, He is our High-priest to make atonement and reconciliation for us. Insomuch, that without Him we can do nothing, but by Him there is nothing but we can do; as the Apostle found by experience, saying, "I can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth me."

Phil. 4. 13.

When we are in trouble, and ready to sink under it, it is He who supports our spirits, and carries us with patience and comfort through it. When we are in straits, and know not which way to take, it is He who guides us by His counsel, and directs us by His Holy Spirit, to what is most for His glory and our good. When we are assaulted with temptations, it is He who stands by us, and gives us power to resist and conquer them. When our passions are turbulent and unruly, it is He who reduceth them in order, and brings our minds into frame again. When we are heavy laden with the burden of our sins, it is He who gives rest and quiet to our souls. When we are at our devotions, it is He who assists and perfumes them with the incense of His own merits. And now we are speaking and hearing of Him,

He is specially present with us, to excite and raise up our affections to Himself: we may be confident of it, for we have His own word for it, saying, "Where two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." [Matt.18.20.] But is He here in the midst of us? How then can we forbear to address ourselves unto Him, and say,

Dear Jesus, thou "Lamb of God," who "takest away the sin of the world," we honour Thee, we adore Thee, we love Thee, for that "Thou first lovedst us;" yea, so lovedst us, as to "give Thyself for us?" What shall we render to Thee, most loving Saviour, for this Thine infinite love and kindness to us? We know that Thou expectest no more, and we can give no less than to love Thee again. This, therefore, is that which we now promise and resolve to do by Thy assistance: beseeching Thee to inspire and inflame our hearts every day more and more with love to Thee above all things, by that transcendent love which Thou hast, and still art pleased to manifest unto us.

But hark! What doth our great Lord and Master say to those who profess to love Him? "If ye love Me," saith He, "keep My commandments;" without which indeed we have no ground to think we love Him, but have all the reason in the world to fear and dread Him. For if, notwithstanding all that He hath done and suffered for us, we shall still continue to break His laws, dishonour His name, and refuse those easy terms which He hath offered to us in His Gospel; what can we expect, but that He will leave us to the judgment of God, to be punished according as our sins deserve? And if He underwent so much for those sins which were none of His own, but others, what a fearful thing will it be for us to "fall into the hands of the living God?" What cause have we then to fear, lest we by our impenitence and unbelief should lose the benefit of all Christ's sufferings, and forfeit our right and title to all the blessings which He hath thereby purchased for us? For what then will become of us? If our Saviour Himself will not save us, who can? And yet if we continue in our rebellions against Him, instead of saving, He will "break us with a rod of iron, and dash us into pieces like a potter's vessel." He will set Himself against us, and be as great an enemy, as He hath been

[John 14. 15.] [Heb. 10. 31.] [Ps. 2. 9.]

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a friend to us: He will let loose the Divine vengeance, and our own consciences upon us: He will consign us over to utter darkness, where "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." He will pronounce that terrible sentence upon us, I dread to repeat it, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." Who can think of this, and not tremble at the thoughts of living in those sins, for which the Son of God died?

[Mark 9. 44.]

[Matt. 25. 41.]

But as we have so much reason to fear the sad effects of sin, in case we continue in it; so, if we repent and turn from it, we have all the ground imaginable to hope and trust on Christ, for pardon and salvation, and for all things necessary both for life and godliness. For now that the Lamb of God hath taken away the Sin of the world, what need we fear? Do we fear shame? He was derided. Do we fear pain? He was tormented. Do we fear judgment? He was condemned. Do we fear death? He was crucified for us. Do we fear any of our fellow-creatures? Our Creator Himself is now become our Saviour and mighty Deliverer; He hath delivered us from great dangers: "He doth deliver; in whom we trust that He will yet deliver."

2 Cor. 1. 10.

And what good thing is there in the whole world, which we may not, which we ought not to hope for now, at the hands of God? For, as the Apostle argues, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all; how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is He that condemneth? It is Christ that died, who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come; nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Rom. 8. 32-36, 38, 39.

Thus, when we consider how great things Christ hath done for us, we cannot but rejoice in hope, and triumph over despair and diffidence. But if we consider withal how

He did it, even by dying for us, and so undergoing all the punishments which were due to our sins; this is enough to make us grieve, lament, and mourn all the days of our life. Insomuch, that I cannot but sometimes wonder with myself, how we are able to lift up our heads, and look one another in the face; that we do not blush, that we are not ashamed of ourselves for being guilty of such sins, for which no less a sacrifice than the Lamb of God Himself could make atonement. Yea, I wonder how we make a shift to live, how we can endure ourselves, and keep our hearts from sinking down within us, when we call to mind what we and our sins have done, even crucified the Lord of Glory, and laid His honour in the dust! "The remembrance of it" cannot surely but be "grievous to us," and "the burden" so "intolerable," as to force not only tears from our eyes, but blood from our very hearts; and make us wish that we had never been born, that we had never lived, that so we might never have been any cause that the Son of God should die.

Such passions, or rather compassions as these, do so naturally flow from the due consideration of our Saviour's sufferings, that we need no other arguments to excite or move them. Howsoever, to keep up our minds a little longer in this holy and devout exercise, let us suppose ourselves to be standing or passing by the cross, whilst our Saviour was hanging upon it, and apprehend Him crying out, as He justly might, after this or the like manner:

"Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow" which is done unto me, "wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger!" [Lam. 1. 12.] Behold and see what your sins have done, what they have done to Me the Eternal Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father! See what scorn and contempt they have brought upon Me, what spittle they have thrown in My face, what gashes they have made in My head, what wounds in My hands and feet, what bloody sweat over My whole body! And yet alas! all that you can see is nothing in comparison of what I feel; I feel the wrath of God, the wrath of My beloved Father, and all that fury and vengeance which is due to your sins; it all now centres

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in Me. Oh, the fire now kindled in My breast! enough to burn up ten thousand such as you to nothing. How doth it [Matt. 26. 38.] flame and spread itself over My whole man! My throat is dry, My heart is faint, "My soul is sorrowful unto death." What a load is now upon Me! What a burden do I now bear! No less than the sin of the whole world! A burden so great, so heavy, so grievous to be borne, that I Myself should sink under it, but that I am supported by My almighty power and Godhead. Oh that you could but look into My breast, that you did but know what pain and anguish, what horror and confusion I there suffer for your sins! How would it grieve you to the heart! And yet all this is not enough neither; for nothing less than death, than My death, will satisfy My Father for your sins: so that either I must die now, or else you must die for ever. And therefore behold My love; rather than that you should die eternally, I Myself for your sakes now give up the ghost and die.

Can we possibly apprehend our Lord complaining thus, as He justly might, upon the cross, and not sympathise and condole with Him? Blessed Lord! we cannot; we cannot but grieve with Thee, having been the cause of all this grief unto Thee. It cuts us to the heart to see Thy blessed body thus torn and mangled, and to consider how Thy innocent soul is oppressed and tormented for our sins, for those sins which we have taken pleasure and delight in. But now Thy death and passion brings them all into our minds, and [Job. 13.26; Ps. 38. 4.] makes us "possess our former iniquities," which are as "a sore burden too heavy for us to bear." Wherefore we humble ourselves before Thee this day, we abhor ourselves, [Jer. 9. 1.] we repent in dust and ashes. "O that our heads were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears, that we might weep day and night!" That nothing may come so near our hearts, nothing lie so heavily upon our spirits, nothing be so grievous and painful to us, as the remembrance of our having lived so as to cause Thee, in whom we live, to die! But shall we do so still? No; by Thy assistance we will grieve our sins to death, and give up our lives to Thee, who hast given Thine for us.

Such thoughts as these cannot but come into our minds,

whensoever by a quick and lively faith we behold the Son of God hanging upon the cross for us; the saddest sight that ever was, or can be seen: so sad, that it would certainly break our hearts, and make us spend our days in nothing else but grief and melancholy, unless we look farther, and behold Him there as "the Lamb of God, taking away the sin of the world:" and so, together with His death, consider also the glorious consequences and effects of it; as that, by it our sins are all expiated, and our obligations to punishment cancelled and made void; by it the whole creation is reconciled to us, and "all things work together for our good:" by it we are restored to the favour of God Himself, and made His own children by adoption and grace; by it we have the image of God enstamped again upon us, and are made, in our capacities, "holy as He is holy;" by it we are empowered from above to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world:" and when we go from hence, by it we shall be carried up to Heaven, and be made as happy as it is possible for creatures to be for ever. The due consideration of which cannot but raise up our dejected spirits again, and make us every one sing with the Blessed Virgin, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." In God my Saviour! This is the ground of all the joy we either have or hope for, that God Himself is become our Saviour; that He hath taken away the sins of the world, and ours among the rest: "Whom therefore having not seen, we love; in whom, though now we see Him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory."

[Rom. 8. 28.]

[Tit. 2. 12.]

[Luke 1. 46.]

1 Pet. 1. 8.

And verily, although we neither have, nor do, nor can ever expect to see our blessed Saviour with our bodily eyes till the last day: yet it is a great joy and comfort to us, that as by faith we have seen Him upon the cross, where He suffered so much shame and pain for us; so by the same faith we may now behold Him yonder in the highest Heavens, where He is exalted at the right hand of God, to be both "a prince and a Saviour," to give "repentance and remission of sins;" where He hath "all power" committed to Him "both in Heaven and earth;" where He reigns as "Lord of lords, King of kings," crowned with "glory and honour,"

[Luke 24. 47; Matt. 28. 18.]

Heb. 2. 9.

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infinitely beyond what we are able to conceive. Where He is "set at the right hand of God, far above all principality, [Eph. 1. 21.] and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Where He hath Angels, Archangels, Cherubim, Seraphim, and all the company of Heaven to wait continually upon Him, to minister unto Him, to praise and worship Him: and where, at this moment, whilst we are speaking and hearing of Him, He is interceding and preparing a [John 14. 3.] place for us, that "where He is, there we may be also." This we have from our own Lord's mouth, and therefore may well desire, with St. Paul, "to be dissolved, and to be with Christ," that we may see Him who hath been thus infinitely kind and merciful to us; that we may see Him "face [1 Cor. 13. 12.] to face," behold the glory which the Father hath given Him, enjoy His presence, sing forth His praises, and solace ourselves in His Divine love and goodness for ever.

Thus we see how our several passions of anger, hatred, love, fear, hope, sorrow, joy, desire, and the like, have all abundant matter to work on, and so ought to be interchangeably exercised, whensoever we behold or meditate upon the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world;" as we do at this time. And now, I hope, we are all rightly prepared and disposed for the great work which remains, ever to adore and praise this Lamb of God, who hath done, and suffered, and procured such great and wonderful things for us. Let us therefore now lay aside all earthly thoughts, and with one heart and mind join with the Holy Rev. 1. 5, 6. Evangelist, in saying or singing, "To Him which hath loved us, and washed us from our sins, in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests, to God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." Or rather, that we may do so high a work the better, let us get above this world, and fix our hearts and affections for a while in Heaven, where our great Lord and Saviour is; and there let us join in concert with the celestial choir, in those seraphic hymns we find them singing in the Revelation: Rev. 5. 12, 13. "Worthy is the Lamb which was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." And again, "Blessing, and honour,

and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever."

But not having been accustomed, as yet, to the hymns of the Church Triumphant, as we hope ere long to be, I fear we may find it something difficult to tune our hearts aright unto them: and therefore let us take that which the Church Militant here on earth hath always used, and which we ourselves do constantly use in the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, ordained on purpose to put us in mind of the great atonement which He, the Lamb of God, hath made for us; and let us, with one heart and voice, join together in that, and say,

"Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for thy great glory, O Lord God! Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty!

"O Lord! the only-begotten Son Jesu Christ; O Lord God! Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy upon us. Thou that takest away the sin of the world, receive our prayers. Thou that sittest at the right hand of God, have mercy upon us.

"For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord; Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen."

SERMON XVI.

SALVATION THROUGH FEAR AND TREMBLING.

PHIL. ii. 12.

Work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling.

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SALVATION is a word that is often in our mouths, and sometimes, I hope, we have it in our hearts too. Be sure we all desire to be saved; and blessed be God for it, we may all be so, if it be not our own faults: for we have an Almighty Saviour, Jesus Christ, the Eternal Son of God,
Heb. 7. 25. who is "able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them." And that He is as willing as He is able to
1 Tim. 1. 15. save us, we cannot doubt, seeing He "came into the world" on purpose "to save sinners," such sinners as we all are; and therefore may be confident that He will save us, if we do but apply ourselves to Him for it, and do what He requires on our part in order to it. What that is, I shall endeavour, by His assistance, to shew from the words I have now read.

The Apostle having been at Philippi, a city in Macedonia, and converted many of the citizens to the Christian Faith, he sends this Epistle to confirm them in it, and to direct them how to frame their lives, and carry themselves in all conditions according to it; that so they might receive the end of their faith, even the Salvation of their souls. Among other things he here puts them in mind of the great readiness they had shewn, in obeying and observing what he taught concerning the things that belonged to their Salvation, while he was present with them, and adviseth them not only to do the same, but much more, now that he was

absent from them, and so could not be ready, upon all occasions, to admonish and direct them what to do. Now he would have them look to themselves, and use their utmost care and diligence in working out their own Salvation, by doing every thing that is requisite or necessary in order to it: "Wherefore, my beloved," saith he, "as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own Salvation with fear and trembling."

For the right understanding of which words, we must first consider what is here meant by "Salvation;" and then, what by "working it out with fear and trembling."

Salvation is a word that is often used in Scripture for preservation, or deliverance from any sort of trouble or distress, in mind, body, or estate; but here, and in many other places, it signifies particularly that whereby we are saved from the wrath of God and eternal damnation, so as to be advanced to everlasting life and happiness; which is therefore called "the Salvation of our souls," and the "Salvation which is in Christ Jesus, with Eternal Glory," who is said to be the "Author of Eternal Salvation." "Neither is there Salvation in any other; for there is none other name under Heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

1 Pet. 1. 9.
2 Tim. 2. 10.
Heb. 5. 9.
Acts 4. 12.

But to make this as plain and practical as I can, that ye may all understand the nature of this Salvation, so as to be enflamed with desires of it, and steadfast resolutions to work it out, I shall induce it from its original, and lay it all open before you in these propositions.

1. As all the Angels, so all men were at first designed to live and abide for ever; and accordingly they all do so. When a man is once formed, and so begins to be, or exist, he is never after annihilated, or ceaseth to be, but always continues in his being or existence: so that Adam himself, and all that ever proceeded from him, in all places and ages, from the beginning of the world unto this day, they still all live, and move, and have their being somewhere, as really as we now live upon the earth: though their souls are separated from their bodies, they are not separated from their being, but still exist, and act as rea-

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sonable souls, and will continue to do so in their separate state, until the Last Day; when their bodies being united again to them, they shall live together unto all Eternity.

2. As all men live for ever, so all live more or less in this world; some live a longer, some a shorter time, but all live some time here; some, perhaps, may live but a few minutes, or an imperceptible time, but some they must live: for no man can go into the other world, without taking this in his way; his soul must first live in a body upon earth, before it can be translated into another state; others live here for many years, as blessed be God, many of us have already done; some heretofore, lived two hundred or three hundred, some near a thousand years; now, it is rare for any to live an hundred; neither doth any man know how much longer he shall live, than he hath lived already.

3. But this we all know, that how long soever any man lives in this world, he must at last go into the other; this being designed only for our *temporal*, the other for our *eternal* state, which we enter upon immediately upon our leaving this: the soul being no sooner separated from the body, and so out of this world, but it is at the same moment in the other. So that death is only our departure or translation out of one state into another; out of this into the other world.

4. According as men live here, well or ill, so hereafter they must live in pleasure or torment; for every one shall
2 Cor. 5. 10. receive "the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." And accordingly,
[Tit. 2. 12.] they who "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present
2 Thes. 1. 8, 9. world," shall live happily in the other: but they who "know not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." And
Matt. 25. 46. so "these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

5. The place where all impenitent and unbelieving sinners
Matt. 22. 13. must live for ever, is called "Hell," a "dark" and "gloomy place," "outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth," where they live in the extremity of pain and
Mark 9. 44. torment, both in mind and body; where their "worm dieth

not, and the fire is not quenched," where their consciences are continually gnawed and fretted with the remembrance of their former sins, and the wrath of Almighty God is always burning in their breasts, never to be quenched or abated; where they lie scorching in that "everlasting fire that is prepared for the Devil and his angels," and so have those fiends and furies all about their ears; where they never have any quiet in their minds, nor ease in their bodies, nor so much as "one drop of water to cool their" inflamed "tongues;" where they are always restless and uneasy, confounded, "afflicted, tormented" with a quick sense of God's wrath and fiery indignation against them, for not obeying the Laws, nor believing the Gospel which He had revealed to them. This is the portion of the wicked, the bitter cup which they must drink in the other world: and that which is worst of all, they can never drink it all off; for as fast as they drink, fresh will still be poured in, and so their unspeakable misery and torment will be continued for ever.

Matt.25.41. [Luke 16. 24.]

6. But they who repent and believe the Gospel in this world, at their departure out of it go to a place of a quite different nature, called "Heaven," a place as full of pleasure and satisfaction, as the other is of astonishment and confusion: for here the "spirits of just men made perfect," live in perfect rest, and ease, and love, and peace together, fearing nothing, lacking nothing, desiring nothing, as having all things they can desire; neither can they envy the Holy Angels themselves, being made *equal* to them in all respects and fellow-communers with them in all their joys and honours. Here the "righteous shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father," having the light of His countenance shining continually upon them; which so refresheth, delighteth, and transports their blessed spirits, that they are always brisk and lively, always pleasant and cheerful, always singing and praising, and adoring the Eternal God, and the "Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne." "The Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne;" it was He that brought them thither, and now they live with Him there, and "behold the glory which the Father hath given Him." O blessed sight! methinks the very thoughts of it should make us all long to be there, that we may see our dear Lord and Saviour

[Heb. 12. 23.] Matt.13.43. [Rev.5.13.] John 17. 24.

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shining forth in all His glory! Then we shall clearly see His infinite love and goodness to us, and partake of all the felicities that He purchased for us with His own blood. [Heb. 1. 2.] He is made "heir of all things," and in Him we shall then inherit all things too, that God ever made, and Him also that made them: for we shall then behold Him manifesting His special love and favour to us, smiling upon us, and displaying all His glorious perfections before us, whereby we shall be filled with all true joy and happiness, as full as our souls can hold, or can be made capable of. This [Ps. 149. 9.] "honour have all the Saints:" this perfection of bliss and [Num. 23. 10.] glory have all they who live the life, and "die the death of the righteous:" this they always have, not only now and then, but continually: not for some time only, but to all eternity.

This is that Salvation, that Eternal Salvation which the Apostle here speaks of, and would have us to work out. He supposes that we are all capable of it, and may have it if we will; for it is offered to all, and therefore to us as well as any other: but we must not think that it will drop into our mouths while we are asleep, or be forced upon us, whether we will or no. But if we desire in good earnest to have it, we must in good earnest labour after it, and make it the great care and business of our lives to obtain it; or, as the Apostle here speaks, we must work it out "with fear and trembling;" where every word hath its weight, and deserves to be duly weighed by us. We must "work," we must work it "out," and we must work it out "with fear and trembling."

First, we must "work:" Salvation is not a thing to be played with, much less to be got by sloth and idleness; but they who would have it, must "labour" and "work" hard for it. He who hath purchased it for us, and by whom John 6. 27. alone we can therefore have it, saith, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give unto you." It is He who gives it, but He gives it only to those who labour for it. As in the parable, the master of the vineyard gave to those who had wrought in his vineyard but Matt. 20. 1, &c. one hour, as much as he did to those who had "borne the

burden and heat of the day:" but he gave to none but such as wrought there; so here, "Eternal Life is the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It is God alone who gives it, and He gives it only through Jesus Christ. So that whatsoever a man doth, he cannot merit or deserve it, but still he is wholly beholden to the free Grace of God for it: for, after all, it is His free gift. But howsoever, He never gives it, but only to such as "labour" for it, by doing all "such good works as He hath prepared for them to walk in," as the way and means whereby He gives it to them; which therefore are called "the means of Salvation:" and he that would attain the end, must use the means whereby to attain it. Now there are several works which God hath appointed us to do, as the "means" whereby to receive "Salvation" from Him.

Rom. 6. 23.

[Eph. 2. 10.]

Such are, first, temperance and abstinence; for, as the Apostle saith, "Every man that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things: now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." As if He had said, They who strive and run in a race to get only a crown of leaves, a corruptible and fading crown, they take care to keep their bodies in a good "temper," that so they may be active and nimble, and better able to hold out to the end of the race. How much more we, who strive for an "incorruptible," an "eternal crown!" We must be sure to be "temperate in all things," to diet ourselves, to keep our bodies always in such a case and disposition, that they may not hinder us in "running the race that is set before us" for it. But for that purpose, we must not only keep our bodies alway clean and tractable by constant "temperance," but we must keep them under also, by frequent abstinence and fasting. This is one of the means that St. Paul himself used for this end; "I keep under my body," saith he, "and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a cast-away." And if he was forced to take this course, unless we follow his steps, we can expect no other but to be "cast-aways" indeed. Wherefore they who would "work out their Salvation," must begin here: they must be always "temperate" both in meat and drink, and must per-

1 Cor. 9. 25.

[Heb. 12. 1.]

1 Cor. 9. 27.

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form the great duty of "fasting," so as to bring their flesh "into subjection" to the Spirit. And if the strict observation of the days prescribed by our Church for "fasting" and "abstinence" will not do it, as it may effectually in most, they must observe more; and never think they do it to any purpose, until their bodies are so entirely subdued and kept in such obedience to their souls, as no way to impede or hinder them in the use of all other "means" appointed for their "Salvation."

Among which, "prayer" is one that we must constantly exercise ourselves in; for as Salvation itself, so every thing that is requisite or necessary towards it, comes from God; and we have no grounds to expect it from Him, unless we ask it of Him: but if we ask it of Him, He will most certainly give it us, whatsoever it is, even His Holy Spirit itself to "direct, sanctify, and govern both our souls and bodies in the ways of His Laws, and in the works of His Commandments," so as to work in us "both to will and to do" whatsoever He requires of us, in order to our obtaining eternal life: for we have His own Word for it, that He will "give His Spirit to them that ask Him." But then we must take His Word, and accordingly "trust" and "depend" upon Him for it; we must "ask" in faith, "nothing wavering." Neither must we "ask" it only once or twice, but every day continually. We must "pray without ceasing." We must continue "instant in prayer," and that too, both "privately" in our closets, and "publicly" in His own house, where He is always "in the midst of those" who meet together "in His Name," ready to grant whatsoever they jointly ask in it.

[Phil. 2. 13.]

Luke 11. 13.

James 1. 6.

1 Thes. 5. 17.

Rom. 12. 12.

Matt. 18. 20.

But for that purpose, to our praying we must often join also the "hearing" of His Holy Word, as the ordinary way whereby He is pleased to convey His Holy Spirit to us, with all the gifts and graces we pray for. For as He made us at first by His Word, so He renews or restores us to our first estate by His Word, by speaking or declaring His will and pleasure to us; His Holy Spirit moving upon our hearts, while His Word is sounding in our ears, and so working us up to "new" and holy "creatures:" as we often read in Scripture, how the Spirit of God

fell upon people, whilst they were hearing God speaking to them by His Prophets or Apostles. But the Word is the same still, faith still "comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." Wherefore all that really desire faith, and by consequence whatsoever else is required to the "saving" of their souls; they must not only "search the Scriptures," and read the Word of God themselves, but they must often hear it from some that are empowered and sent from Him to declare it to them, and must accordingly receive it, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God, which worketh effectually in them that believe."

Rom. 10. 17.

[John 5. 39.]

[1 Thess. 2. 13.]

These are the ordinary means whereby the great work of our Salvation is begun; but then to carry it on and finish it, we must frequently receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, ordained on purpose to put us in mind of, and so to exercise and confirm our faith in our Blessed Saviour, by whom alone we can ever be saved. For after all that we can do, we can never obtain Salvation any other way than by Him. And we have no ground to expect that He should save us, unless we do that which He Himself hath required of us in order thereunto; but He Himself hath required us "to do this in remembrance of Him," which He, be sure, would never have done, if we could have been saved as well without it. And therefore, all that live in neglect of this duty, and yet hope to be saved by Him, will find themselves egregiously mistaken. But they who receive this Blessed Sacrament, as faithfully, and as frequently as He requires them to do it, receive by degrees such a measure of His Grace and Holy Spirit, to direct, assist, and govern them in what they do, that they are thereby enabled not only to work, but "to work out their Salvation with fear and trembling."

[Luke 22. 19.]

What it is to "work" it "out," is the next thing to be considered; and it had need to be considered well, as we desire not to labour in vain: for whatsoever pains we take about our Salvation, all will come to nothing, unless we work it out, that is, unless we work so as to obtain it. I say obtain, not effect it; for that is not in our power. It is God our Saviour only that is the Author or efficient

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cause of our Salvation; it is He only that can effect it in us and for us; and therefore we are not here commanded to effect or make it ourselves, but to "work" and labour for it. But we must work and labour for it, so as that we may at last obtain it by Him, in the use of the foresaid means which He hath appointed for it.

For which purpose, we must first use not only some, but all the said means. We must carefully avoid that dangerous rock, upon which so many have made "shipwreck of faith and a good conscience," and so of their Salvation, by doing only some things that are required towards it, and neglecting the other. As some are altogether for "bodily exercise," for chastising, mortifying and subduing the flesh to the Spirit, but rarely use the means whereby to have the "Spirit" of God to rule and govern it: others are only for saying their prayers; and if they do but that every day, they think they do enough; never troubling themselves about fasting, or hearing the Word, or receiving the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, as if these were useless insignificant things. Whereas others are only for hearing of sermons, placing the whole of their religion in it, and rashly venturing their Eternal Salvation upon it; as if hearing how to get to Heaven would bring them thither, without any more ado. And of those who do use some or more of these means, yet most live in the shameful neglect of the Holy Eucharist, seldom or never partaking of the blessed body and blood of Christ, as if that was of no use at all to their Salvation, although it was ordained by their only Saviour for that very end and purpose, that they might be saved.

[Tim. 1. 19.]

Many, I fear, who are here present, know all this to be true of themselves, by their own experience: I wish they may not know it hereafter to their cost; as they certainly will, if they continue in the neglect of any of the means that are appointed for their Salvation; for they can never work it out by any one, but by all together. He that only ploughs his land, can expect no crop, unless he sows it too: and although he both ploughs and sows it, yet unless he harrows and weeds it, and defends it from fowl and vermin, his expectations will still be frustrated. So

here by fasting and prayer the fallow ground of our hearts is ploughed up, and made fit to receive the seed of God's Word. But it is by hearing that the seed is sown, and by the Sacrament that it is preserved and strengthened, so as to grow up to perfection. And therefore he that doth one without the other, had as good sit still and do nothing at all: though he "labour" ever so much "for Salvation," he can never "work it out," but will still want something or other that is necessary to his obtaining of it. And this, I verily believe, is the great reason why many, as our Saviour saith, "shall seek to enter in at the strait gate, and shall not be able," even because they "seek" it partially; they do some things, but they do not all that is required of them: and then it is no wonder if they lose their labour. Luke 13. 24.

Wherefore, as ever ye desire not to labour in vain, but to "work" so as effectually to "obtain eternal life," you must go through the whole course which God hath prescribed for it; you must fast, and pray, and hear God's Holy Word, and take all opportunities that you can possibly get, of receiving His blessed body and blood. Neither must ye only do all these things, one as well as another, but ye must work hard, with all your might and main in every one of them. You must fast in good earnest, so as to keep your bodies under; you must pray heartily, so as that ye may be heard; you must hear attentively, so as to receive the truth in the love of it; and ye must receive the Holy Sacrament with that faith and reverence, that ye may really partake of Christ's body and blood, to strengthen and refresh your souls.

And as you must thus use all the means of grace and Salvation heartily and sincerely, so you must do it constantly too; not only a little now and then for diversion, when ye have nothing else to do, but you must make it the great business of your lives, as long as you live, how long soever it may be. As Anna the Prophetess, when she was eighty-four years old, still "served God with fastings and prayers night and day," so must you still continue to exercise yourselves not only in these, but likewise in the other means of Salvation, whensoever you can have them Luke 2. 37.

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administered to you all the days of your life. You must never think that you have done enough in this great work, but must still go on, "still striving to enter in at the strait gate," and pressing "towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," "till ye come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." "Till ye have added to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity." Till ye are wholly sanctified in soul, body, and spirit, and so are "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light." Then, and not till then, you may be truly said to work out your Salvation.

Luke 13. 24. Phil. 3. 14. Eph. 4. 13. 2 Pet. 1. 5, 7. Col. 1. 12.

Which the Apostle therefore here adviseth you to do "with fear and trembling;" that is, with all humility, care, and diligence, that we can possibly use. For "fear and trembling" is not here opposed to that faith and confidence which we ought to have in God: but first, to pride, conceit, and confidence in ourselves; as where it is said, "Be not high-minded, but fear." And secondly, to that carelessness and indifferency that is too common and apparent in most men about their Salvation, when men pretend to look after it, and accordingly hope to be saved when they die, and yet take no pains at all about it while they live: as if Salvation was so inconsiderable a thing, that they ought not, or so easy to be attained, that they need not trouble their heads about it; and therefore never think of it, unless perhaps upon the Lord's Day, when they go to Church: and but perhaps, or scarcely then; for when they are at Church, they do not much concern themselves with what is done there, unless it be to observe whether the minister doth his duty. This is all the care that men generally take of their Salvation, and yet they hope to be saved.

Rom. 11. 20.

And this therefore is that which the Apostle here forbids, by requiring us to "work out our Salvation with fear and trembling;" not to be careless and secure, but solicitous, diligent, and industrious in it. As servants must obey

their masters "with fear and trembling," and we must [Eph. 6. 5.]
all "serve God with reverence and godly fear," so we Heb. 12. 28.
must work out our Salvation too, fearing "lest a promise Heb. 4. 1.
being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it," lest we should at last miss of it, through our own default and negligence in looking after it.

And certainly, if any of us do come short, or miss of it, it must be our own faults: for notwithstanding our own weakness and inability to do so great a work of ourselves, yet if we do but use the means as well as we can ourselves, and trust on Him for it, God Himself will make them effectual to our Salvation. This is the argument which the Apostle here useth to encourage us to set upon this great work; for having said, "Work out your Salvation with fear and trembling," he immediately adds, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."

I know there hath been a great stir made about these words, both by expositors and other learned men, why the Apostle should require us to "work out our Salvation," and yet tell us at the same time, that "it is God which worketh in us both to will and to do:" for if it be God that "worketh" in us, why need "we work?" What can we do, when He does all for us? Wherefore, to make both the meaning of the words, and the force of the argument as plain as I can; suppose I, seeing a farmer negligent of his business, advise him to till his ground, to plough and sow his seed, that it may increase and multiply: but the farmer, to excuse himself, answers, Why should I take all this pains? Why harass out my horses in ploughing my ground, and then throw away my corn upon it, when after all I cannot make it take root, "increase and grow" up, and so may lose all my labour, my time, and my corn too? But then I reply; It is true, you cannot do that, but you can plough and sow, and though you cannot, yet "God" [1 Cor. 3. 7.]
can "give the increase;" He hath done it, and still doth it every year: and you have no reason to doubt but that He will do it for you, if you prepare your ground, and do every thing that is usual to be done for it. So here the Apostle bids us "work out our Salvation." But what, may some say, what can we do? Why do ye bid us do so great a

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2 Cor. 3. 5.

thing, when we are not "sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves." Why then should we set upon such a work as this, when we know beforehand that we can never effect it? We can never "work" it "out," why then should we throw away our time in "working" at all about it? To this the Apostle answers, It is true, you cannot save yourselves, nor so much as will to do it as of yourselves; but howsoever, you need not be discouraged from undertaking so great a "work," for it is "God" which "worketh in you both to will and to do." And if you do, as you easily may, all things that He requires on your parts, "He will work" in you whatsoever is further necessary to your obtaining "Salvation." If you sit still and do nothing, you can expect no favour or assistance from Him: but if you plough and sow, He will give the increase. If you fast and pray, and hear His Word, and receive His Sacrament, He will bless and sanctify what you do, so as that you shall "work out your Salvation," though not by your own strength, nor by any virtue in the means themselves, yet by His grace and Holy Spirit co-operating with them, and so "working in you both to will and to do" whatsoever He requires of you.

I do not question but that some here present have found this verified in themselves; for it is the common experience of all God's faithful people, that while they have been exercising themselves with all their might in the great duties which God hath ordained, whereby to "work out their Salvation," they have found Him working in them "both to will and to do;" while they have been "keeping their bodies under" by fasting and abstinence, they have received the Spirit, to mortify the deeds of the flesh; while they have been presenting their prayers and supplications unto God, they have found His Holy Spirit moving upon their souls, clearing up their apprehensions of His Divine glory and goodness, confirming their faith in Him, fixing their thoughts upon Him, inclining their will towards Him, exciting, enlarging, enflaming, overspreading their whole hearts with love and affection to Him, and possessing them with such a sense both of His majesty, and of His mercy to them, as neither I, nor they themselves are able to express.

While their hearts have been raised up in praising and magnifying Almighty God, they have sometimes been "caught" on a sudden as it were, with St. Paul, "into the third Heavens," and there have seen or heard, or at least have felt things which "it is not possible for them to utter;" while they have been hearing God's Holy Word, they have found themselves struck, and pricked in their consciences, and their hearts all opened, as Lydia's was, to receive the truths that were delivered to them. And while they have been feeding upon Christ's body and blood, they have found their whole soul strengthened and refreshed by it, in so wonderful a manner, that they were transported with "joy unspeakable and full of glory;" and are now able to say with the Apostle, "The power of Christ resteth upon me;" and "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." [2 Cor. 12. 2.] [1 Pet. 1. 8.] 2 Cor. 12. 9. Phil. 4. 13.

Thus, while His people are at "work" about their "Salvation," God Himself "worketh in them both to will and to do," and so enables them to "work" it "out." But that He may do so for us, as we must keep our minds wholly intent upon the work we are about, so we must keep our faith wholly fixed upon Him to carry us through it: and I verily believe, that as there are many Divine sentences inserted and recorded in Holy Scripture, on purpose that we may have God's Word, whereupon to build our most holy faith upon all occasions; so particularly in this place, the Apostle hath no sooner bidden us to "work out our Salvation with fear and trembling," but he presently adds, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do;" that so having God's own Word for it, we may believe and trust on Him to enable us to do what He here commandeth, which otherwise we could not. For God Himself having here said this by His Apostle, if we accordingly take His Word, and depend upon Him for it, He will most certainly influence the means we use, and "work" in us while we are using them so effectually, that we shall "work out our Salvation," and do all things requisite to our obtaining eternal life, "through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

These considerations, I hope, by the Grace of God co-operating with them, have already prevailed upon some

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here present, to set upon this great work in good earnest; I heartily wish they did so upon all, that all who have heard them would now "work out their Salvation with fear and trembling;" and if there be any, as I fear there are, who have not yet resolved upon it, I desire you further to consider:

1. Consider, this is the most profitable work you can ever do; whatsoever ye do besides will turn to little or no account at last: by your moiling and toiling about other things, you may perhaps, and but perhaps, get something considerable in the eye of the world, but ye must ere long leave it, and leave it to such as will never thank you for it, nor be ever the better, but the worse for having it; you yourselves, be sure, will have nothing of it, but eternal grief and torment in your minds, for having taken so much care and pains for nothing, for worse than nothing, for Hell and Damnation. Whereas, by "working out" your "Salvation," you may obtain all the good things that you can possibly desire, whatsoever can any way contribute to your being perfectly and eternally happy, to your living in ease and plenty for ever.

2. Consider, as this is the greatest good that ye can ever attain to, so it is the hardest matter that can be to attain it; there is a great deal of "work" to be done, before ye can "work out your Salvation," and therefore ye had need be always at it. Praying and hearing now and then, which is all that most men do, will never do the business; but ye must exercise yourselves continually both in those and all other means that conduce to it, or else you will never be able to accomplish it. And "whatsoever ye do, ye must do it with all your might," as for your life; for your life, your eternal life, depends upon it. And it is well, if after all, ye can attain to it; for ye will meet with a great many difficulties in it: which howsoever should not discourage, but rather make you more active and diligent, as knowing that Heaven will make amends for all.

3. Consider, how hard soever it may be, it is possible for every one of us to "work out our Salvation," for many have done it already. There are many "glorified saints" at this time in Heaven, who once were sinful mortals upon earth, as

we now are. But when they were here, they could do this great "work" effectually: why then may not we? We have the same faculties, the same Scriptures, the same Saviour, the same promises, the same Sacraments, and all the same means of Salvation as they had. Why then may not we "work" out our Salvation as well as they did? If we do not, the only reason is, because we will not. If we would but apply our minds wholly to it, there is never a one of us but may certainly do it.

4. Especially considering, that we have the power of Almighty God Himself always ready to assist us in it. His "Grace" is always sufficient for us, "His strength" is made "perfect" in our weakness. It is He who "worketh in us both to will and to do:" and what may we not do by Him, who can do all things by Himself? [2 Cor. 12. 9.]

Let us therefore now resolve, by God's assistance to do this work, this great work, and do it thoroughly. Let others "labour," if they please, "for the meat that perisheth," let us make it the chief study and business of our lives to "work out our Salvation with fear and trembling." Let us leave no stone unturned, neglect no duty, no opportunity, no means that may help us in it: still keeping our eye fixed upon the Eternal God our Saviour, trusting and depending upon Him alone, to direct, assist, and carry us through the whole work, so as to bring us at last to live for ever with Him, who "ever liveth" and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God blessed for ever. [John 6. 27.]

SERMON XVII.

THE CONSCIENCE VOID OF OFFENCE.

Acts xxiv. 16.

And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a Conscience void of offence, toward God and toward men.

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Happy is the man that can repeat these words after St. Paul, and say them as truly as he did: happier than any one else can imagine, or he himself perhaps at present may perceive. Be sure none can taste the sweetness, nor feel the pleasures of a "good conscience," but only they that have it: they can tell you, that it is the only joy and comfort of their lives; and if they had it not, they should think it worth their while to give all they have in the world for it, and reckon it the best bargain they ever made: and therefore having once got it, they do all they can to keep it; it is their constant care and study, it is their daily, their continual exercise, as we see here in the Apostle, who exercised himself always to keep his "conscience void of offence." And so must all they do, who desire either to get it, or not to lose the best jewel they can ever have, a "conscience void of offence," a clear and a "good conscience," such a one as the Apostle here speaks of; they must employ and exercise themselves continually about it, as he did, otherwise they are never likely to have it, as he had. It is easy enough, I confess, to talk much of "conscience," to plead and argue for it, and to pretend highly to it, as many do, who nevertheless know nothing of it; for they that make the greatest noise about it, have commonly the least cause to do so, unless it be to make others believe that of them, which they themselves know to be false. But for any man

to keep his "conscience" always pure and "void of offence," is certainly one of the hardest matters in the world, by reason of our fall in Adam; whereby our whole man is disordered and out of tune, and that part especially that we call "conscience;" for that also, as the Apostle saith, is "defiled." It is so horribly corrupted, that it very rarely executeth any part of its office aright: it is often fast asleep, and takes no notice at all of what a man doth, or doth not; and if it happen to be roused up and awakened, it often rages and grows furious, driving him headlong into horror and despair: it commonly excuseth where it ought to condemn, or else condemns where it ought to excuse us: it is very gentle and indifferent in the most important affairs: but in things of lesser moment, or of real indifferency, it frets and fumes, and so makes men mighty serious in trifling, but very trifling in the most serious things. Indeed the heart, or "conscience," of man is "deceitful above all things;" there is no trusting to it, without extraordinary care and circumspection; which all must use who desire to keep themselves within the compass of their duty, and so their "consciences void of offence towards God and towards men." Hence it is that the great Apostle himself, notwithstanding his extraordinary parts and endowments, notwithstanding his extraordinary gifts and graces, notwithstanding the extraordinary assistances and influences of the Holy Ghost continually accompanying of him, yet he himself was forced to take so much pains with himself, as to make it his continual exercise to keep his "conscience" right; and if we would attain the same end, we must also use the same means as he did, by making it our continual exercise and employment.

Tit. 1. 15.

[Jer. 17. 9.]

And verily, it is a great comfort and encouragement to us, that though it be difficult, it is not impossible to keep our "consciences" always in order: for we see that others have done it, and particularly St. Paul; for that he did it, we have not only his own word, but the testimony of the Holy Spirit of God Himself, by which he spake when he said, "Men and brethren, I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." And again in my text, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of

Acts 23. 1.

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offence toward God and toward men." And why may not you and I do so, as well as he? We have the same obligations upon us to do it, we have the same means of grace, we have the same Spirit to assist us in the use of those means, and we have the same Saviour to intercede for God's acceptance of what we do, as he had: why then should not we keep our "consciences void of offence," as he did? Certainly if we do not, the fault is wholly our own; for we may do it, if we will but set about it, as he did, in good earnest. Which therefore, that all here present may for the future do, I shall endeavour to give you the best instructions and directions about it, that I can, from these words: and for that purpose shall consider,

I. What we are to understand by conscience, and what by a "conscience void of offence."

II. How our consciences may be always void of offence toward God and men.

III. What great reason we have to keep them always so.

As for the first, that which we call "conscience," the Holy Ghost all along in the Old Testament calls the "heart;" as where it is said, "that Pharoah's heart was hardened," "David's heart smote him," &c. And sometimes in the New; as where St. John saith, "If our heart condemn us," or "condemn us not." Which I therefore observe, because it will save us the labour of consulting the schoolmen and other learned writers, concerning the nature and seat of the "conscience," what it is, and where seated, whether in the understanding, or will, or both, or neither, but is a distinct power or faculty of itself? All which are needless questions; for "conscience" is a thing that is better understood by sense and experience, than by any definition or description that can be given of it. If a man doth but turn his eyes inward, and look into his own breast, he may there see and perceive something, as it were, putting him in mind of what he should, or should not do; and afterwards "excusing," or "accusing" him for doing or not doing of it; which is nothing else but his own mind or heart, as sensible of the difference between good and evil, and then reflecting accordingly upon what he doth, whether it agree with that sense he had of it, or no. If he doth that which he is sen-

[Ex. 7. 14; 1 Sam. 24. 5.]

1 John 3. 20, 21.

[Rom. 2. 15.]

sible is good, and his duty to do, then his mind is quiet and at rest, having his own senses, as it were, pleased and satisfied: but if he doth that which he is sensible is evil, and ought not to be done, this must needs disturb and offend his mind, as being contrary to the sense it had of the thing, and so causing a kind of a conflict in it. All which is excellently expressed by St. Paul, where speaking of the Gentiles, he saith, that when "they which have not the Law, do by nature the things contained in the Law; these having not the Law, are a Law unto themselves:" *i.e.* though they have not God's revealed will or law written among them, yet they having a natural sense of the good and evil of the same things that are commanded or forbidden in the Law, and acting accordingly; these having not the Law written in their books, have it notwithstanding in their hearts, their own minds telling them what they should or should not do, and so are instead of a "Law to themselves." And then it follows, "Which shew the Work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." As if he should have said, seeing these by the mere natural instinct and sense they have of virtue and vice, do often eschew evil and do good, they thereby plainly shew, that though not the Law itself, yet the Work, the main intent and scope of it, is in effect written in their hearts; συμμαρτυρούσης αὐτῶν τῆς συνειδήσεως, their own "conscience" bearing witness with God, either for them or against them, whether they do well or ill, and their own thoughts all the while "accusing" or else "excusing" one another according as they do not, or else do really follow that sense of things which God hath implanted in their nature. Where we may likewise observe the reason why it is not called simply εἴδησις, or "science," but συνείδησις, or "conscience;" because it is the same science or sense of things, in a lower degree, with that which God Himself hath in an higher: and therefore it doth not simply "bear witness;" but, as the word signifies, it leaves witness with another, even with God, whether the thing be good or evil.

[Rom. 2. 14.]

Rom. 2. 14, 15.

Now, seeing there is in every man naturally such a sense of things as this is, which we call "conscience," whereby he

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perceives the difference betwixt good and evil, and feels in his own heart a secret liking of the one, and abhorrence of the other, and so is forewarned either to do it or not to do it; hence we may easily gather what it is properly to have a "conscience void of offence toward God and toward men," even a due sense of our having done what we ought, and nothing else towards either, and so have no cause to be offended or displeased with ourselves for neglecting any duty, or committing any sin that we are sensible of; which is therefore called also a "pure" and a "good conscience:" a "pure conscience," as being clear and free from that offence and disturbance which they feel, who act contrary to their own thoughts and sense of things, and so offer violence to themselves: as where St. Paul saith, that he had

2 Tim. 1. 3. "served God from his forefathers with a pure conscience;" that is, he had never done any thing which he thought to be a sin, nor left any thing undone which he thought to be his duty to God: so that his conscience had nothing to accuse him of in either respect; and therefore it was a "pure," a "clear conscience," and a "good" one too, as the

Acts 23. 1. same Apostle calls it; where he saith, that he had "lived in all good conscience before God." For that this is the proper notion of a "good conscience," we may learn from

Heb. 13. 18. the same Apostle, saying, "We trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly," where the latter words explain the former: he therefore had a "good conscience" in all things, because it was his will, desire, and endeavour in all things to live as became an honest and a good man. To the same purpose is that of St. Peter, where

1 Pet. 3. 16. he adviseth all Christians to have a "good conscience, that whereas," saith he, "they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ." Where we may observe, that a "good conversation" and a "good conscience" are correlatives, they always go together, and influence one another. He that doth not lead a good life, can never have a "good conscience;" but his "conscience" must needs be "good" whose life is so.

And thus it was that St. Paul kept his "conscience" always "pure," and "good," and "void" of all "offence,"

even by avoiding whatsoever he thought would offend God, and doing whatsoever he thought would please Him; as appears from his saying, "For I know nothing by myself, 1 Cor. 4. 4. yet am I not hereby justified;" that is, I am not conscious to myself that I indulge myself in any thing that I know to be offensive to God; yet I do not from thence conclude, that I am just before God: for He knows many things by me, which I myself do not, for which He may justly condemn me; but howsoever my own "conscience" doth not. To the same purpose he elsewhere saith, that "touching the Phil. 3. 6. righteousness which is in the Law," he was "blameless." Blameless, not in the sight of God, but in his "own conscience," that had nothing to accuse him of, or to blame him for, because he punctually observed all things whatsoever the Law required of him, to the best of his knowledge, and by that means kept his "conscience" always "void of offence both toward God and toward men."

II. Now, understanding how St. Paul did it, we may easily learn how we also may do this great work, even always keep our "consciences clear, and void of all offence." But, howsoever, it being a matter of so great importance, that we may be sure to avoid all mistakes about it, and be rightly informed in the true nature and notion of it, and in the way and manner how to do it, I desire you to consider, with me, these following particulars:

First; he that would keep his "conscience void of offence," must keep it always awake, and upon its duty, ready upon all occasions to admonish him of what he ought to do, and to reprove and correct him if he doth it not. For he that suffers his "conscience" to sleep or slumber, and to be forgetful or careless of its office, had as good have none at all; and then, be sure, can never have a good one. This is the unhappiness of those who are always so busy about the world, that they never give themselves time to think of their duty, and so stifle their "conscience" in a crowd of worldly business.

This also is the sad effect of living long in any sin, and multiplying the acts of it so long, till it become habitual: for the "conscience" being often touched with it, at length it grows hard and callous, so as not to be sensible of the

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evil of it; which the Apostle therefore calls a "conscience seared with an hot iron." For as flesh that is cauterised, as the word signifies, or "seared with an hot iron," at first feels great pain, but afterwards grows hard and senseless, feeling nothing that is put upon it; so the "conscience," although at first it be very sensible of the evil and mischief of sin, yet being often enflamed and tormented with it, it afterwards grows dead and stupid, past all feeling, so that nothing will make any impression upon it. This is that which the Prophet calls a "stiff neck" which nothing can bow, and an "hard heart" which nothing will break; such as Pharaoh's was, which all the miracles which God wrought in Egypt, could never affect or move at all: but though he saw the finger of God in them, he could not feel it. This is a very sad and deplorable condition indeed: for such men are so far from having a good "conscience," that they have in a manner none at all, or at the best, such a one as is scarce capable of being made good. It is true, such a "conscience" never troubles them, as not being offended at any thing they do, and therefore may be thought to be "void of offence;" but alas! it is so far from that, that it is full of nothing else, as they will find by woful experience, when their "conscience" being roused up out of its dead sleep, either by some extraordinary judgment in this, or at their departure into the other world, will come like an armed man, and execute the utmost of its rage and fury upon them, filling their souls with inexpressible horror and confusion for those very sins which they used to take pleasure and delight in.

1 Tim. 4. 2.

[Jer. 17. 23.]

Wherefore, as you ever desire to keep your "conscience" clear and "void of sin," you must keep it always in action; so watchful, as to see the very first appearance of evil, and so tender, as to feel the least motion towards it. Such a one was David's, whose heart smote him for only cutting off the skirt of Saul's garment, because that looked like rebellion against his prince, and revenging himself upon his enemy: and such must yours be, if you would always have it clear and good. You must preserve and nourish in your mind so quick a sense of God, as to fear to offend Him in the least as well as in the greatest matters, and scruple every thing

[1 Sam. 24. 5.]

rather than nothing. But then you must have a care of falling into the other extreme, even of indulging such a groundless scrupulosity about things indifferent, as to doubt or fear, where there is no cause for it, and so to make your lives uneasy to yourselves, and unserviceable to God.

For which purpose, therefore, the next thing to be considered, in order to the keeping our "conscience void of offence," is, that it govern itself in all its actions by the revealed will or Word of God, which is the rule or standard for "conscience" to walk by. So that as every man is bound to act according to his own "conscience," so every man's "conscience" is as much bound to act according to God's Word; and unless it do so, it cannot possibly be "void of offence," for itself is guilty of a very great one, in going beyond or beside the rule that God hath set it. As if a man's "conscience" tells him that such a thing is his duty, although it be not agreeable to God's Word, or that such a thing is a sin, although it be no way contrary to it; that man's "conscience" offends in a high degree, by usurping upon God's prerogative in determining of good and evil, what ought or ought not to be done by us. And, therefore, if any doubts or scruples arise in a man's mind, whether he may or may not do such a thing, his only way is to consult the Scriptures, and if he find it neither directly nor indirectly commanded there, he may choose whether he will do it or no; and if he find it nowhere forbidden there, he may do it if he will, and trouble himself no further about it, for his "conscience" is no further concerned in such things, but only to put him upon doing that which seems best to his reason and judgment; to which God Himself hath referred us, in such things as He hath left undetermined in His holy Word: except they be determined by those whom He hath set over us in Church or State, and to whom in such cases our "consciences" are obliged by the same word to submit.

But in all other things, a "good conscience" always takes its measures from God's Word, and acts according to that, at least not contrary to it. Otherwise it is no "good conscience," nor indeed is it "conscience" at all, properly so called, but rather fancy, or humour, or prejudice taken up from education, or interest, or from the company a man

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keeps; all which are commonly mistaken for "conscience," and under that disguise betray people into all manner of vice and wickedness. As we see in the Jews, who being prepossessed with groundless conceits, without any foundation in the Word of God, concerning the Messiah, they were so far from believing Jesus to be the person, that they fancied it to be their duty to persecute both Him and His followers. Insomuch that our Saviour speaking to His disciples concerning them, saith, "They shall put you out of the synagogues; yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doth God service." And so it hath been in our days, wherein many have run into schism, faction, and rebellion; have robbed, pillaged, and murdered their neighbours, yea, and their king too: and yet, as my charity prompts me to believe, some of them thought it to be their duty, and that they did God service in it; and therefore pretended their "conscience" put them upon it. Which could not be; for "conscience," properly so called, is that sense of good and evil which God hath implanted in us, which is always agreeable to His revealed will. Whereas these things are so contrary to it, that whatsoever it was that put them upon doing such things, be sure it could not be properly "conscience." They might think it to be their duty, but their "conscience" could not tell them so; for that, if hearkened to, would have taught them the quite contrary: and when once awakened, will be horribly offended both with their doing such things, and with their hypocritical pretence of "conscience" for it.

John 16. 2.

Wherefore that we may be sure to keep our "conscience always void of offence," we must be sure to keep close to the written Word of God, and to regulate both our actions and consciences too according to that, without minding either unwritten traditions, or new lights and revelations, or our own private conceits and opinions. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no light in them." It is by this that we shall be judged at the last day, and therefore it is by this that both we and our consciences must act now, or otherwise it will be impossible for us to keep them always "void of offence."

Isa. 8. 20.

But here we must further observe, that when we speak of the Scriptures as the rule of "conscience," it must be understood of the true sense and meaning of them, not of any false interpretations or wrong conclusions drawn from them; for they are as far from being God's Word, as our own private fancies or prejudicate opinions are. And if our "conscience" should follow them, instead of being "void" and free "from offence," it would fall into it every day: which therefore that it may not do, we must not rack and torture the words, to make them speak what we would have them, but search them impartially, so as to find out what God Himself means and designs by them, lest otherwise we be in the number of those unstable and unlearned men St. Peter speaks of, who "wrest the Scripture to their own destruc- 2 Pet. 3. 16.
tion," which all are in danger of, who either wilfully or carelessly understand the words in a wrong sense. But then you will say, How may we be sure to find out the true sense of the Scriptures, so that our "consciences" may be rightly informed out of them concerning our duty to God and men? To that I answer, That the best way is to do whatsoever you know already to be there commanded in plain and express terms; and then if you seek for other things with an humble and sincere temper of mind, you cannot miss of finding out God's will and pleasure in whatsoever else he would have you to do. For this we have the Word of Christ Himself, saying, "If any man will do God's John 7. 17.
will, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." The question then was, Whether what Christ taught was agreeable to God's Word or no, and how they might know it? For the resolving of which question, he assures them, that if they first did what they knew already of God's will, they should soon know whether what He taught them was really God's Word or no. Which being asserted and promised by Christ Himself, we cannot doubt of the truth of it, but that all who sincerely endeavour to do whatsoever they know to be their duty, shall certainly know whatsoever they ought to do. And the reason is, because God Himself always directs such in the finding out His will, by the assistance of His own Spirit, which having dictated the Holy Scriptures, best knows the

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true sense and meaning of every expression in them: for which purpose therefore Christ hath promised, that the said Holy Spirit shall be with His Church, and all the faithful members of it, "to the end of the world." "To guide them into all truth" that is necessary for them to know, and to "teach them all things" that are necessary for them to do.

Matt. 28. 20. John 14. 16. John 16. 13. John 14. 26.

But that we may be thus actually assisted, directed, and illuminated by the Holy Spirit of God, so as rightly to understand His whole will revealed to us in Holy Scripture, as we must do what we know already of it as well as we can, so we must, in an especial manner, perform such duties as He hath appointed in order thereunto. We must give ourselves to fasting and praying for it, to reading and hearing His Holy Word, and to the frequent receiving of the Lord's Supper; for these are the means whereby we may obtain the Spirit of God, which usually moves upon our hearts in the sincere performance of such duties, enlightening our minds, informing our judgments, and clearing up our apprehensions of God's revealed will, and so directs us how to keep our "Consciences always void of offence both toward God and toward men."

"Both toward God and toward men;" that is the next thing required to the keeping our "conscience always void of offence:" it must be with respect both to "God" and "men," so as to perform our whole duty to both; for if we fail in any one point towards either, that may gall our "consciences" as much as if we had failed in all: at least our "conscience" cannot be truly said to be "void of" all "offence," so long as we offend either "God" or "man," by not performing sincere obedience to the whole Law, divided on purpose into two tables, the one respecting "God," and the other "man;" that so we may understand and perform our duty distinctly unto both. "Then shall I not be ashamed," saith David, then shall my conscience not be offended, "when I have respect unto all Thy commandments." Thus it was that Zacharias and Elizabeth kept their consciences "void of offence," by being "both righteous before God, walking in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless." And Christ Himself saith, "Ye are My

Ps. 119. 6.

Luke 1. 6.

John 15. 14.

friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." And therefore unless we do every thing that He hath commanded, we are none of His friends, and by consequence cannot have a good "conscience;" for that is proper only to Christ's friends, to such as truly love Him and are beloved by Him.

This is a thing much to be observed, for most men can make a shift to do some, or perhaps many things that are commanded, but still live in the constant neglect of others; and commonly they take up with things of lesser moment, and let go the greater; as our Saviour observed in the Scribes and Pharisees, saying, "Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for ye pay tythe of mint, and anise, and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." And then He adds, "Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel;" that is, which make great conscience of little things, but none of great ones. The same is too common in our days, wherein people pretend mighty scruples of conscience about the *circumstances* of religion, but take no care of the *substance;* which plainly shews, that whatsoever may be pretended, there is nothing of "conscience" in it, at least not a good one, for that is always equally concerned about all, and every one of God's commands, whether contained in the first or second table; for if it offends against either of them, it cannot possibly be the "conscience" which the Apostle here speaks of, that is "void of offence toward God and toward men." [Matt. 23. 23, 24.]

Wherefore, that you may have such a "conscience" as this, you must be sure, in the first place, to perform your whole duty unto "God;" you must love Him with all your "heart" and "soul, with all your might and mind;" you must sanctify Him above all things, by making Him your only "fear" and your only "dread;" you must put your whole trust and confidence on Him, and rejoice continually in Him; you must "pray without ceasing," and in "every thing give thanks" unto Him: you must resign up your wills to His, so as to make His your own; you must worship and adore Him "with reverence and godly fear;" you must serve, honour, and obey Him with a perfect heart and [Deut.6.5.] [1 Thes. 5. 17.] [Heb. 12. 28.]

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a willing mind; "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, ye must do all for His glory." You must admire His perfections, desire His favour, and prefer His honour before all things in the world; you must read, and hear, and meditate upon His Holy Word, praise and celebrate His most holy name, and often commemorate that death which His only Son hath undergone for you. You must not blaspheme His name, nor deride His worship, nor profane such times and places as He hath set apart for His own use. You must not leave His Church, nor despise His children, nor wrong His ministers, nor rob Him of any thing dedicated to His service. In short, you must do nothing that He hath forbidden, for that reason, because He hath forbidden it: and you must do every thing that He hath commanded you to do, either to or for Himself, upon that account, because He hath commanded it: and yet, after all, you must believe and rely only upon His Son Jesus Christ, both for His assistance of you in the doing of it, and for His acceptance of it when it is done.

[1 Cor. 10. 31.]

By this means you may keep your "conscience void of offence toward God;" but that will signify nothing, unless you do it toward "men" too. Neither indeed can you do one without the other; for you do not perform any duty to God aright, unless you do it in obedience to His command; but if you do so, you cannot but perform your duty unto men too, for the same reason, because He hath commanded that also. And therefore you must "give unto Cæsar things which are Cæsar's," as well as "unto God the things which are God's;" you must "submit yourselves to every Ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the King as Supreme," or other governors in Church and State: you must render to every one their due, "Tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour." You must honour and respect your parents, and not suffer them to want any thing that you can help them to: you must "not kill," nor maim, nor hurt your neighbour; nor so much as be angry at him "without a cause." As you must be meek and humble, so you must be sober, and modest, and chaste, and "temperate in all things;" you must not cheat or defraud, or steal from one

[Matt. 22. 21.]

[1 Pet. 2. 13.]

[Rom. 13. 7.]

[1 Cor. 9. 25.]

another, but be true and faithful to your word, just and righteous in all your dealings, charitable and liberal, as far as you are able, to the poor. You must "not bear false witness against your neighbour," nor backbite, nor defame, nor slander, nor raise nor believe any evil report against him. You must not covet or desire what God hath given unto others, but be contented and thankful for what He hath bestowed upon you. In a word, "Whatsoever ye would that others should do to you, even so" you must "do to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets:" the sum and substance of our whole duty to one another, as our Lord hath taught us. And therefore if we do it aright, we shall keep our consciences "void of offence toward men," as well as "toward God." Matt. 7. 12.

I say, if we do it aright; which is the next thing to be considered in this case: for we must not think that "conscience" will be satisfied with bare doing the thing that God commands, unless we do it in the manner also wherein God hath commanded it to be done, even heartily and sincerely, out of pure obedience to His command; for if we do it from any other principle, or for any other design, our own "consciences" will tell us, that we do not obey God, but dissemble with Him, making as if we endeavoured to please and honour Him, when indeed we do not, but rather seek our own honour, or interest, or something or other which we should not. But we must not think to put off our "consciences" so; for they are intimately acquainted with our most secret designs, and with the first principles from whence our actions flow: and except they be right, our "consciences," if awake, must needs see it, and be offended at it. Hence St. Paul, in order to the keeping his conscience "void of offence," avoided all manner of hypocrisy and deceit in all his actions, performing them heartily and sincerely as unto God: "For our rejoicing is this," saith he, "the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world." His "conscience," it seems, bore him witness, that he had not used any worldly craft, nor carried on any ill designs, but that he had been sincere and upright in all his 2 Cor. 1. 12.

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ways; and, by that means, was not only "void of offence," but full of joy and comfort. And if we take the same course, none of us but may have as good a "conscience" as he: for although there be many failures and imperfections in our best duties, as doubtless there were some in his; yet if we be but sincere, as he was, in the performance of them, our "consciences" need not, or rather ought not to trouble us for them. For God, now under the Gospel, "accepts of" the "sincerity" of our hearts, "instead of" that "absolute perfection" which the Law requires in our works; and therefore if we be but hearty and sincere, as we ought, though we are not so exact and accurate as we desire to be in all our actions, our "consciences" can have nothing to say against us, but must needs witness for us that we come up to the terms of the Gospel, and so are void of all "offence toward God and toward men."

But there is one thing still behind, without which all the rest will avail us nothing; and that is, that we do not only keep our "conscience" thus "void of offence" now and then, but that we always do it: "Herein," saith the Apostle, "I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence;" the word is διαπαντὸς, at all times, in all places, upon all occasions, in all conditions and circumstances of life: and verily he that hath not a "good conscience" always, never hath one; for that is not a thing to be taken up and laid down at pleasure, lost to-day, and regained to-morrow, now bad, and then good again: no, "conscience, when once offended, is not so easily appeased: at least, it cannot be said to be "void of offence," so long as any one thing troubles it. Insomuch that although a man should keep his "conscience" clear all his life long, except one day, yet if he doth any thing upon that day which is offensive, he may feel it all his life after; and he will find it, though not impossible, yet very difficult to bring his "conscience" into order again. And, therefore, he that would always have a "good conscience," must always keep it clear and "void of offence," by "walking in holiness and righteousness before God, all the days of his life:" whatsoever happens, he must still take care of the main chance, even to keep close to the rule which God hath set him, without ever turning aside from it, either to the right hand or to the left. He must never suffer

[Luke 1. 75.]

himself to be overpowered either with hope or fear of any thing in this world; but as God's word must be the only rule of his "conscience," his "conscience" must be the only rule of all his actions, so as never to do any thing, upon any account whatsoever, but what he may and can do with a "good conscience," according to the rules which God Himself hath prescribed in His Holy Word. Whosoever thus sincerely goes on in a steady and uniform course of piety and virtue, without being diverted by any thing he meets with here below, such a one, and none but such, can truly say as St. Paul here doth, "Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence, both toward God and toward men."

Thus I have now shewn how you may all keep your "consciences void of offence," if ye will; what now remains, but that ye should be "willing to do it?" This therefore is that which I would now persuade you to. But before I shew how much it concerns all to keep a "good conscience," it will be needful to direct some how to get one: for I fear there may be some here present who never had a "good conscience," or at least, have lost it long ago; and ever since have had either no "conscience" at all, or such a one as hath been a continual trouble and torment to them. And what shall I say to such? Truly their condition is very sad, much sadder than any one can imagine but themselves: but howsoever, I would not have them despair; for, as I observed before, though it be difficult, it is not impossible to quiet a troubled mind, to appease an offended and angry "conscience," and to reduce it to a right temper again: but how must that be done? Why, in short, there is no way to heal such a wounded spirit, but by applying the blood of Christ to it, which as the Apostle saith, "Purgeth the conscience from dead works to serve the living God," that is, it cleanseth the "conscience" from all the filth it hath heretofore contracted by deadly sins, and enables it for the future to "serve the living God:" for, as St. John assures us, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." And therefore he prescribes this as the only remedy to a wounded conscience; "If any man sin," saith he, "we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and He

Heb. 9. 14.

1 John 1. 7.

1 John 2. 1, 2.

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is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." As if he had said, If any man have sinned, and his "conscience" be, as it ought, troubled for it, let him remember, that "Jesus Christ" is now interceding for us in Heaven; and that when He was upon earth, "by His one oblation of Himself, once offered, He made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of" mankind in general, and by consequence, for his among the rest. And therefore let him but repent and believe in Christ for the pardon of his sin, and it shall be pardoned, both in the court of Heaven, and likewise in that of his own "conscience." Yea, this is the method which Christ Himself, the great physician of souls, hath prescribed in this case; "Come unto Me," saith He, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give ye rest," plainly implying, that they who labour under the sense, and are heavy laden with the burden of their sins, if they do but apply themselves to Him, by a true and lively faith, they shall soon be eased of their trouble, and cured of those deadly wounds which sin had made in their breast, as the Israelites were, when being stung by serpents in the wilderness, they looked up to the brazen serpent, which Moses, by God's appointment, made as a type of Christ, in this very case.

Matt. 11. 28.

Num. 21. 9.

Wherefore, whosoever thou art, who hast heretofore committed such sins as now lie heavy upon thy "conscience," ready to sink thee down into despair, look up to Christ, as wounded for those very sins, firmly believing, that upon thy hearty and sincere repentance, God, for His sake, doth absolve and acquit thee from them, so as to rest fully satisfied in thine own mind, that He will never be offended with thee any more for them, and then thy "conscience" also will cease to be so. But then I must say to thee as Christ said to the impotent man whom He had cured, in the Gospel; "Behold thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." Take care for the future, to keep thy "conscience always void of offence both toward God and men."

John 5. 14.

And verily, had you all once felt the smart of a galled conscience, you would need no other argument to persuade

you to avoid it; for that, doubtless, is the greatest torment and misery that mankind is capable of, as the wise man observes, saying, "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?" No man, certainly, except Almighty God support him under it, either in judgment to punish him, or else in mercy to bring him to repentance by it. Ask but such a one, who labours under it, what it is to have a "wounded," an "offended conscience," and he will tell you, that "No sorrow is like unto his sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted him in the day of His fierce anger." "The arrows of the Almighty are within him, the poison whereof drinketh up his spirits, the terrors of God set themselves in array against him." O the wormwood and the gall, the anguish and bitterness of his soul! How doth he fret, and fume, and vex, and tear, and torment himself at the remembrance of his sin and folly! Every thing is uneasy and troublesome to him; yea, he is a burden to himself, he cannot endure himself, but wishes he had never been, or could cease to be; his mind is distracted, his thoughts confounded, his whole soul is overspread with darkness and horror, and tossed to and fro, like a troubled sea, when it cannot rest, "whose waves cast up mire and dirt." Thus is the poor man always upon the rack, distorted, tormented, terrified, and hurried about by his own outraged "conscience;" as if all the fiends of Hell were let loose upon him. What would he now give, or rather what would he not give for a "good conscience?" If all the crowns and sceptres upon earth were his, he would willingly part with them all upon these terms, and reckon it the best purchase that he ever made.

Prov. 18. 14.

[Lam. 1. 12.]

Job 6. 4.

Isa. 57. 20.

But you, perhaps, may wonder, how any should be so mightily troubled for their sins; for you cannot but all acknowledge that you have sinned, and are sorry for it, and wish you had never done it: but you never found your "consciences" so much concerned about it, but have lived as cheerfully and pleasantly as if you had never sinned at all. It may be so; but I believe there are but few of you but have found your "consciences" give you a secret *item* now and then, more than you are willing to speak of: and the less you have felt hitherto, the more is behind. Though

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your sins were committed many years ago, they still lie at your doors, and your consciences want nothing but God's command to fall upon you for them; for He can make you,

Job 13. 26. as He did Job, "to possess the iniquities of your youth," and bring all your sins into your minds together, like so many swarms of wasps about your hearts, to sting you to death. And if He lets you alone, and suffers you to go on without control all your life, that will be the worst of all; for then this life will be no sooner ended, but your misery will begin, and never end at all: for your consciences will rise up with a witness against you, and persecute and torment you for ever. This Christ Himself hath forewarned you of, where He speaks of Hell, as of a place where the

Mark 9. 44. "worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" that is, where men's consciences, like so many greedy, insatiable, and immortal worms, will be always gnawing at their breasts, and God's wrath, like a raging fire, burning and scorching their souls for ever.

Consider these things, and then tell me, whether it be not your wisdom and your interest, as well as duty, to keep your "consciences always void of offence," whatsoever it cost you; and therefore be advised for the future to do it. If ye happen to be in a storm, throw all overboard, rather

[1 Tim. 1. 19.] than make "shipwreck of faith and a good conscience:" wealth, honour, liberty, life itself, let them all go, rather than lose that, without which all things else will be but a trouble to you; and which, of itself, will not only supply their want, but afford you more comfort than all things

[2 Cor. 1. 12.] upon earth besides. "This is our rejoicing," saith the Apostle, "the testimony of our conscience." This is true,

[Tit. 2. 12.] solid, substantial joy indeed, when our "conscience bears us witness," that we have sincerely endeavoured to "live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." This makes a man to be always of a brisk temper, a sound mind, a cheerful countenance, and a merry heart; and so, as the

Prov. 15. 15. wise man saith, "he hath a continual feast." Such a one

[Luke 16. 19.] "fares deliciously every day;" not as Dives did, upon meat

[Rom. 14. 17.] and drink, but as the Angels do, upon righteousness, and love, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Whatsoever happens, he is still the same; "wise" as a "serpent," "in-

nocent" as a "dove;" "gentle" as a "lamb," but "bold as a lion;" fearing no evil, because he hath done none. Though the winds blow, and the waves beat upon him, he hath still tranquillity and peace within: this is his support under all his troubles, his refuge in all dangers, his riches in poverty, his honour in disgrace, his pleasure in pain, his strength in weakness, his health in sickness, his life in death, when all things else will fail him: but his "good conscience" will go along with him into the other world, where he will perfectly taste, relish, and enjoy the goodness and the sweetness of it, and bless God to all eternity, that he ever had it, through Jesus Christ our Lord; "to whom with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory for ever."

SERMON XVIII.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF JESUS CHRIST PREFERABLE TO ALL OTHER.

1 Corinthians ii. 2.

For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

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It having pleased our Great Creator to endue us with such principles of reason and understanding, whereby we are capable of knowing Himself, His will, His works, and all things necessary to our serving and enjoying Him, and likewise to fill us at first with such knowledge, as much as we could hold; although by the fall of our first parents our brains are shattered, and all our faculties so disordered and out of tune, that now we actually know but very little, if any thing at all, as we ought; yet our capacities still remaining, we cannot but long to have them filled again. And hence it is, that all men naturally desire knowledge; and how much soever a man knows, he still desires to know more. And seeing no man can possibly attain the knowledge of all things that are to be known, men seem to offer at making up that defect, by undertaking them severally; some to find out one thing, and some another, according to their several tempers, inclinations, and circumstances; and then to communicate their inventions, for the increase of each other's knowledge. As some are only for observing the phænomena, or outward appearance; others are for prying into the secrets of nature, and the first principles by which every thing in its place acteth under God: some are for taking the dimensions of the earth, and particular places in it; others are for

calculating the motions of the Heavens, and those immense bodies that move or seem to move there. This man keeps close to his plain mathematical demonstrations; another soars aloft among high metaphysical notions and subtle speculations. One man is for searching into the mysteries of several arts, that have been invented and practised in the world; a second is for understanding the languages that are spoken in several nations; a third is for learning how to put words and sentences so neatly or so cunningly together, as to make them the more pleasing to the ears, or more forcible upon the minds of those who hear them. Thus I might instance in every thing that mankind is capable of knowing: for whatsoever it is, some or other are always employing their thoughts about it. And if a man finds out any thing which he did not know before, or if he doth but think he doth so, it is a mighty pleasure and satisfaction to his mind, because it tends towards the filling up that vacuum which was there, by reason of his not knowing so much as he was capable of.

But there is one sort of knowledge which few people endeavour after, although it would do them more good, and therefore ought to be preferred before all the languages, arts, and sciences in the world besides, however useful they may be in their respective places. What that is, I shall not undertake to determine, but leave that to one, whom we cannot but acknowledge to have known more than any one, or all us here present put together; to one who had learned so much, that Festus thought much learning had made him mad: I mean St. Paul, who, by the inspiration and command of God Himself, here tells the Corinthians, that he "determined not to know any thing among them, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Whereby he hath certified all men, that in his divinely inspired judgment, this kind of knowledge so far exceeds all other, that none else deserves to be named with it. Acts 26. 24.

The occasion of the words was this: St. Paul having been some time before at Corinth, and there planted the Gospel among the inhabitants of that city, in the verse before my text he tells them what arts he had used, or rather what he had not used in the doing it. "And I," saith he, "brethren,

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when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God." He had used neither rhetoric nor logic, neither elegancy of speech nor subtlety of argument, to persuade them to embrace the faith of Christ, but had only in plain terms declared to them the testimony which God had given of him. And having told them this, he acquaints them in my text, with the reason why he took this course; "For," saith he, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." That is the reason why he dealt so plainly with them, because he did not think it necessary, or intend either to know himself, or to make known any thing else to them. The words may be understood both ways, but they both meet at last in this, that the knowledge of "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," is of itself sufficient to direct a man in the way to eternal life, and therefore is preferable to all other knowledge; there being no other knowledge whatsoever, that can do it without this, but this will do it without any other: not that the knowledge of other things is altogether useless, but that this only is necessary both for Ministers to teach, and Christians, as such, to learn; as comprising under it all things that can any way conduce to their being holy here, and happy for ever.

Wherefore ye have no cause to complain, when we preach this plain doctrine to you; it is our duty to do it, and it is for your interest that we should: we have here the example of the great Apostle for it, and may truly say with him,

1 Cor. 9. 16. "Necessity is laid upon us, yea, wo unto us, if we preach not the Gospel," if we preach not Jesus Christ, the end of the law, and the sum and substance of the Gospel: if we do not this, we act not according to the commission that He hath given us, nor do the work He sent us about, and so lose our labour; and after all our preaching unto others, shall be cast away ourselves. And I am sure you will have no cause to thank us for any other doctrine than this, or what tends some way or other towards it; for whatsoever it be, though it be ever so finely dressed up, and set off to please your ears and fancies, it can never convert or save your souls, and so you will be neither the wiser nor better

for it; for you have but one Saviour in the world, and that is Jesus Christ; if He do not save you, nobody else can. Aristotle can never save you with all his philosophy, nor Tully with all his rhetoric, nor Plato neither with his fine notions borrowed from Moses; no, nor Moses himself: he must conduct you in the right way through the wilderness, but it is Joshua, or, as the Greeks call Him, Jesus, only, that can bring you into the Land of Canaan; the law must direct our steps, but it is the Gospel only can save our souls: the Gospel, as it reveals Jesus Christ our only Saviour and Redeemer to us; and therefore reveals Him to us, that we may know Him: and by consequence, as ye cannot wonder that St. Paul did it, so ye cannot blame us, if we, after him, determine "not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

But that I may set this in as clear a light as I can before you, I shall shew,

I. What we ought to know concerning Him.

II. That this so far exceeds all other knowledge, that we may reasonably determine with the Apostle, not to know any thing else.

To find out the first, we need not go from my text, where whatsoever is necessary to be known concerning our Saviour, is reduced to two heads, what "He is," and what He "hath suffered;" or, as the Apostle expresseth it, "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Jesus Christ, ye know, are the two names whereby He is usually called, sometimes by the one, sometimes by the other, and very often by both together. Of which the first, "Jesus," is His proper name, signifying His Person; the other, "Christ," signifies His Offices: and so both together contain under them all that we ought to know, either concerning what He is in Himself, or what He hath done for us; as we shall clearly see, when we have taken a full view of each of them, and what is imported by them.

As for the first, "Jesus," which in Hebrew signifies a Saviour, that is a name that was given to some in the Old Testament, as to Joshua the son of Nun, and to the sons of Josedech, Sirach, &c.; but it was given them only by their parents upon earth. Although there was, doubtless, an

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over-ruling hand of Providence in the son of Nun's being called Joshua; or, as the Greeks always write and pronounce it, Ἰησοῦς, Jesus: in that he succeeding Moses, and bringing the children of Israel into the typical Land of Canaan, which Moses could not do; he was a type of the true Jesus, who brings the people of God to Heaven, the true land of promise, which the Law, given by Moses, could never have done.

But this name was given to Christ by His Heavenly Father, the Most High God Himself, who sent a special messenger, one of the highest, if not the highest of all the Angels in Heaven, Gabriel himself, to command that His name should be called Jesus; and that too, not only once, but at two several times: first, at the Annunciation, when he came to the Blessed Virgin, to acquaint her that the Saviour of the World should be born of her; for, having first assured her of the great favour which God had for her, by saying, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured! the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women;" she being troubled at his saying, and casting in her mind, what manner of salutation this should be, "the Angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favour with God: and behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name Jesus." There can be no question made of it, but that the Virgin knew what that name signified, even a "Saviour:" but why He should be called by that name, the Angel did not think good to tell her at present in plain terms; but he told her that, from which she might easily perceive how fit and able He would be to answer that name, or to be a "Saviour." For when she had said unto the Angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? The Angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that Holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." For he calls that which should be born of her, not an "Holy God," nor an "Holy Man," but an "Holy Thing," τὸ ἅγιον, in the neuter gender, to signify that He should be neither the one nor the other singly by itself, but both "God" and "Man" together, a certain "compo-

Luke 1. 30, 31.

situm" made up of two natures, the divine and human in one person. Which wonderful union being effected by the immediate power of God; "Therefore," saith He, "this Holy Thing shall be called the Son of God:" as the first Adam also was, because he likewise was formed immediately by God Himself. For that I look upon as the proper meaning of His being called the Son of God in this place; the Angel here giving that as the reason why He should be so called. After this the Angel having acquainted her, "that her cousin Elizabeth had conceived a son in her old age," and put her in mind, that "with God nothing shall be impossible;" Mary said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, be it unto me according to thy word." Whereby she having signified her submission to the Divine Will, and her full consent that it should be as the Angel had said, the Holy Ghost immediately came upon her, and the "power of the Highest overshadowed her;" so that the Son of God was at that moment conceived in her (as the Fathers generally agree), and therefore the business he came about being now done, it follows, "And the Angel departed from her."

Luke 3. 38.

Luke 1. 38.

Some time after this, an Angel, and doubtless the same, appeared also unto Joseph, to whom the Blessed Virgin was espoused, and said, "Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost: and she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins." Where we see, that after He was conceived, the Angel required Joseph also, as His reputed father, to give Him this name; and acquaints him with the reason why He should be so called, even because "He should save His people from their sins:" whereby he likewise plainly gave him to understand, not only that He who should be born of the Virgin, was to be born as a "Man," but also that He was the true "God Jehovah," of whom the royal prophet saith, that "He shall redeem Israel from all his sins." For in that the Angel here saith, that Jesus shall do that which the Prophet saith Jehovah shall do; it is plain, that this Jesus is Jehovah, the Lord God Almighty, who alone can "save His people from their sins:" as appears also from what follows.

Matt. 1. 20, 21.

Ps. 130. 8.

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For after the words before quoted, either the Angel himself, as some, or the Evangelist, as others think, saith, "Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet, saying, Behold a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emanuel; which being interpreted, is, God with us." Where Tertullian rightly observes, that the name "Emanuel" is interpreted, *Uti non solum sonum nominis expectes, sed et sensum;* 'That thou shouldst not consider only the sound, but the sense or meaning of the name.' The Angel saith, "He shall be called Jesus;" the Prophet saith, "He shall be called Emanuel." These two names do not sound alike, but they both mean the same thing: for "God's being with us," signifies His "saving us;" which He could not do, except He be with us. But here, by His being called "Emanuel," according to the idiom of the Hebrew tongue, we may rather understand that He is "Emanuel," "God with us," and that too in the highest sense that can be, even so as to be God, with our nature united to His Divine Person. So that "Emanuel" in Hebrew signifies the same as Θεάνθρωπος in Greek, 'God-Man;' or, as the Angel expressed it before to the Blessed Virgin, τὸ ἅγιον, that "Holy Thing," consisting of two distinct natures united in one and the same Person, as God is here said to be with us, in one and the same word, "Emanuel."

Matt. 1. 22, 23.

Tertul. adv. Jud. c. 9.

This is the true doctrine of the Church concerning the person of Christ, as it was declared by the General Councils, and hath been all along believed and preached both before and since, as being revealed in God's Holy Word, as clearly and fully as any article of our Christian faith. And it was but necessary it should be so, most of the others being grounded upon this, as might easily be shewn, if it was to our present purpose. But I mention it here, only as it was intimated to our Lord's real mother, and reputed father, together with God's will that He should be called "Jesus;" which name was accordingly given Him at His circumcision, and therefore is His proper name, pointing out His Person to us, as He is the Word made Flesh, "Emanuel," God and Man in one person, and so exactly qualified to be what the name imports, "Our Saviour."

Luke 2. 21.

The other name whereby He is usually called, is "Christ," which in Greek signifies "Anointed," or rather "the Anointed," as "Messiah" doth in Hebrew. Under this name and notion He was expected long before He came into the world; as appears from the woman of Samaria saying, "I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ." And it is very observable, that as the Angel Gabriel, by God's appointment, ordered His name to be called Jesus; so the same Angel, above five hundred years before, called His name "Messiah," or "Christ." For it was He who said to Daniel, "Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for Himself."

John 4. 25.

Dan. 9. 25, 26; Luke 2. 11.

But why Jesus was thus called "Christ," "Messiah," or "the Anointed," we may learn from St. Peter, saying, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." This was His anointing: He was anointed both with God and by Himself, which none ever was but He. And whereas there are three sorts of offices which men have been anointed into, Prophets, Kings, and Priests; none but He ever was anointed into them all together. Melchisedec was a King and a Priest, but He was no Prophet; Samuel was a Prophet and a Priest, but he was no King; David was a King and a Prophet, but he was no Priest: but Jesus was both Prophet, and King, and Priest, and made so by God's own immediate unction, and therefore might well be called "the Christ," or "Anointed."

Acts 10. 38; Matt. 3. 16.

Wherefore as His name "Jesus" signifies His Person, so by His name "Christ" we understand the Offices which He undertook, that He might really be our Jesus, by saving us from our sins. And therefore to know Jesus as He is "the Christ," it will be necessary to consider these three Offices, which He undertook and executes for us.

I. He was anointed to be a Prophet, to make known the Divine Will unto the world. This we have from Himself, saying in and by His Prophet Isaiah, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek." For that these

Isa. 61. 1.

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words are meant of Him, He Himself declared, when having read them in the Synagogue at Nazareth, He said to those which heard them, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears." From whence we may observe, that He is the Great Prophet of the world, all other true Prophets speaking from and under Him, and by His Spirit's moving and directing them what to say: for that it was His Spirit that spake in the Prophets, we are also assured by the same Spirit speaking in His Apostle, and saying, that the Prophets searched "what, and what manner of time the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify." It was Christ therefore, who, by His Holy Spirit proceeding from Him, revealed the will of God all along unto the world, before He Himself came into it. And when He was here, He did it with His own mouth, acquainting them with every thing that was necessary for men to know: "All things," saith He, "that I have heard of My Father, I have made known unto you." The same He did afterwards by His Apostles, and still continueth to do it by such as succeed them in the Ministry of His Word, to this day, and to His second coming: they all speak only in His name, and by His commission, He Himself also being always with them in the doing of it; "Lo!" saith He, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Luke 4. 21.

1 Pet. 1. 11.

John 15. 15.

Matt. 28. 20.

Wherefore all the knowledge we have, or can have, either of God Himself, or His Holy Will, we are beholden to Christ, as our Great Prophet, for it; who being likewise Jesus our Saviour, would be sure to conceal nothing from us that is necessary for us to know, in order to our being saved; nor reveal any thing to us, but what was necessary to the same end. And therefore, as ever we hope or desire to be saved by Him, we must be sure to believe what He hath taught, how much soever it may seem above our carnal reason: and we must do whatsoever He hath commanded us, how much soever it may seem contrary to our temporal interests; yea, we must believe what He hath said, therefore because He said it; and observe what He hath commanded, therefore because He hath commanded it: otherwise we do not believe or obey Him at all. And if we do not hearken to Him as our Prophet, we can never expect He should be our Saviour.

He Himself hath told us, in effect, that He will not; first by His servant Moses, and then by His Apostle St. Peter, saying, that every soul that will not hear that Prophet (meaning Himself) "shall be destroyed from among the people." Deut. 18. 15, 19; Acts 3. 23.

And as He was anointed to be a "Prophet," so likewise to be a "King:" this the Prophet Isaiah, by His direction, speaks of, saying, "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the Government shall be upon His shoulders; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace," &c. This the Angel Gabriel also acquainted Daniel with, calling Him, "Messiah," or "Christ the Prince." And the same Angel discovered the same thing likewise to the blessed Virgin; for having told her, that she should bring forth a Son, he adds, that He, her said Son, "shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the Throne of His Father David; and He shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end." Jesus therefore is a "King:" He is a great, a mighty, an Almighty "King:" He is "King of kings, and Lord of lords." He is the supreme, the universal monarch of the world: He hath "all power given to Him both in Heaven and Earth." He hath a "name given Him that is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth: and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." He is set at the right hand of God in "Heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: He hath all things put under His feet, and is made the Head of all things to the Church." To the Church, to defend it, to enlarge it, to cleanse it, to govern it, to constitute officers in it, to prescribe laws to it, and to enable His people to obey them; for He is "exalted with the right hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." As He is a Saviour, He forgives and saves His people from their sins; and for that purpose, as He is a "Prince," He gives

Isa. 9. 6, 7.

Dan. 9. 25; Luke 2. 11.

Luke 1. 32. 34.

Rev. 17. 14; ch. 19. 16.

Matt. 28. 18.

Phil. 2. 9-11.

Eph. 1. 21, 22.

Acts 5. 31.

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them repentance, "repentance not to be repented of." He gives them grace both to repent, and to do works meet for repentance: it is He that gives it, and He alone can do it; without Him "we can do nothing," as He Himself said. But, as His Apostle observed, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." "By Him" we can crucify the flesh, overcome the world, resist the Devil, and make him fly from us: "by Him" we can "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world:" "by Him" we can be "made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light;" and "by Him" we can have it actually conferred upon us: for we can do all things required of us by the power of this Almighty Prince, who is "over all, God blessed for ever."

[2 Cor. 7. 10.] John 15. 5. Phil. 4. 13. [Tit. 2. 12.] [Col. 1. 12.] Rom. 9. 5.

But behold the infinite love of God to mankind! This glorious, this Almighty King, for our sakes, was pleased to condescend so far as to become a "Priest" too; for as He is a "King," so He is a "Priest for ever after the Order of Melchisedec." After the Order of Melchisedec, not after Aaron's Order; for they of the Aaronical Order "were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death: but this man," this God-man, "because He continueth for ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood." A priesthood which passeth not from one to another, as theirs did, from father to son, but is executed always by Himself, in His own Person. And besides, the "Aaronical Priests" went only into the holy place made with hands, and there, with the blood of the sacrifice they had offered, made atonement for the sins of the people but once a year; whereas "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." So that now we have always an Advocate in Heaven, Jesus Christ the righteous; and He Himself, as our great High-Priest, is the "Propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." And therefore "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Heb. 5. 6; 7. 17. Heb. 7. 23, 24. Heb. 9. 24. 1 John 2. 1, 2. Heb. 7. 25.

II. But that we may rightly understand how He executes His Office, and what sacrifice He offered, wherewith to make

atonement for the sins of the world, we must know not only Jesus Christ, but "Him crucified;" for how great, how holy, how excellent a Person soever He be in Himself, that is nothing to us, unless He was "crucified," and unless He was "crucified for us too." And therefore the Apostle did not think it enough to know, or to preach Christ absolutely considered; "But," saith he, "we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness: but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." That is, Christ as "crucified" is the power of God, whereby He destroys the works of the Devil: and the wisdom of God, whereby He makes us wise and good: and so discovers both the infinite power and wisdom of God, in that wonderful redemption which He hath wrought for us. Which He could never have done, if He had not been "crucified:" for God Himself said, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." But no mere man ever did or will do all things which are there written; and therefore every man is cursed by God Himself: and unless this curse be taken off from us, it is impossible we should receive any blessing from Him. Neither can it be taken off us, but by another's bearing it in our stead: for God cannot lie; His word must be fulfilled, and the curse executed somewhere or other; and unless there be one that hath borne it for every man, every man must bear it for himself. But, blessed be God, there is one, Jesus Christ our Lord, who "tasted death for every man." He "hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us." But how was He made a curse for us? By being "crucified." "For it is written, cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." But Christ, when "crucified," was hanged on a tree, and so bore the curse; not for Himself, that could not be, for He had continued in all things which the Law required: and therefore it must be for us, in whose nature He bore it, and for every one that partaketh of that nature. For the nature in which He suffered it, being the common nature of all men, "the curse" was executed upon all men; though not in their particular persons, yet in their general nature, which every man is of;

1 Cor. 1. 23, 24.

Deut. 27. 26; Gal. 3. 10.

Heb. 2. 9.

Gal. 3. 13.

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and therefore may justly be looked upon as having undergone it, according as God said he should.

Especially considering the greatness of the Person that suffered it: not a mere man, not an Angel, not an Archangel, but the only-begotten Son of God, of the same essence and glory with the Father. This the Apostle takes special notice of in this very chapter; where speaking of the Jews
1 Cor. 2. 8. crucifying Christ, he saith, "they crucified the Lord of Glory," which is the same as if he had said, they "crucified" God Himself: and therefore the blood which was then shed upon the cross, was the blood of God. So the same Apostle, or rather the Spirit of God Himself speaking in Him, plainly calls it, where speaking to the Elders of the Church, he
Acts 20. 28. saith, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood." With His own blood! How can that be? Hath God any blood in Him? No, He hath none in His own Divine nature, but He had in that nature which He assumed, and united to His own Divine Person, so as to make it His own nature; and, by consequence, the blood of it was His own blood, which otherwise it could not have been: whereas, that it was so, is evident beyond all contradiction, both from this, where it is expressly called so, and from many other places of God's own word; as likewise from what we shewed before concerning the Person of Jesus, even that He is "Emanuel," God and man in one person: for from hence it necessarily follows, that although He suffered only as Man, yet the Person that suffered was also God; and therefore His sufferings were properly the sufferings of God, His blood the blood of God, as He Himself calls it. And hence it is, that His sufferings were of such infinite worth and merit for mankind, in whose nature He suffered, because the Person that suffered in that nature was of infinite power and glory: and so His sufferings were not only as much, but much more than mankind was ever bound or capable to undergo.

God hath pronounced the curse, under which all manner of punishment is implied, against all men that do not continue in all things which His law requireth; and all men

failing in something that is there required, are bound by God's Word to undergo it: but they are bound to undergo it only in their own *finite* persons, whereas Christ hath undergone it for them in a person that is *infinite.* Which being more than was threatened, and more than all mankind could ever have done in their own persons, He hath thereby not only taken off the curse that was laid upon us, but hath merited for us all sorts of mercies and blessings which our nature, in which He did it, is capable of: particularly, the Divine grace and assistance, whereby we may be enabled sincerely to obey His laws; God's acceptance of what we do, upon the account of what He hath done for us; and His rewarding it at last with no less than an eternal crown of glory.

By this therefore we may see what sacrifice Christ hath offered, and how He executeth the office of Priesthood for us: for He having taken the whole nature of man upon Him, and united it to His own Divine Person, He was pleased to offer it up as a whole burnt-offering, by dying in it upon the altar of the cross, for the sins, and in the stead of all others that partake of that nature; which was therefore both the greatest and the most, I may say, the only true and proper sacrifice that was ever offered: those of the Levitical law being only types and figures of this; but this was such a sacrifice as did really expiate, or, as St. John speaks, "was a propitiation for the sins of the world." 1 John 2. 1, 2.
By means whereof, Christ is now a most effectual Mediator between God and us; as the Apostle shews, where having said, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;" he presently adds, "who gave Himself a ransom for all;" or, as the Greek words, ὁ δοὺς ἑαυτὸν ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, plainly signify, having given "Himself a ransom instead of all." It is by this that He 1 Tim. 2. 6.
is completely qualified to mediate or intercede for all men; so that all who will believe in Him for it, may be discharged from their sins, and fully restored to the love and favour of God again, so as to be justified before Him, accepted of Him, cleansed and sanctified by Him, and at last be made eternally happy in the enjoyment of His Divine perfections. And whosoever, of all Adam's posterity, are so, must ascribe it wholly and solely to "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

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III. These things deserve to be more fully considered by us all, who are so infinitely concerned in them: but what I have thus briefly touched upon, will give us sufficient light into that which I promised to shew in the next place, even that this so far exceeds all other knowledge, that the Apostle might well say, "I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." For, in the first place, from hence we may easily see, that this is the most noble, the most sublime, the most excellent knowledge that we can ever attain: the Apostle calls it, τὸ ὑπερέχον τῆς γνώσεως, the excellency, the super-excellency of knowledge, in comparison whereof all things else seemed as nothing in his sight. "Yea, doubtless," saith he, "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ my Lord." And well might he say so; for what knowledge can be comparable to that of knowing "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified?" The knowledge of all things else is mean and low, perplexed and entangled among the creatures that God hath made: this soars aloft among His Divine perfections, and the highest mysteries that the most refined understanding can ever reach; for to "know Jesus," is to know God Himself; Him by whom all things were made, and "without whom there was not any thing made that was made:" Him who, before all worlds, was begotten of the Father, so as to be of one and the same nature with Him: Him who in the fulness of time was born of a Virgin, so as to be of one and the same nature with us also: Him that is both perfect God and perfect man, and perfectly both God and man in one and the same person. To "know Jesus Christ," is to know the Great Prophet of the world, who teacheth man knowledge, the "King of kings, and Lord of lords," who ruleth and reigneth over the whole creation, over bodies and spirits too; the real High-Priest, with His Urim and Thummim, true lights and perfections shining continually about Him. To "know Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," is to know how the Lamb of God "taketh away the sin of the world;" how all the losses that we suffered in the first Adam, are repaired and made up by the second; how God Himself is made of God Himself, to us "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption;" how

Phil. 3. 8.

[John 1. 3.]

[John 1. 29.]

[1 Cor. 1. 30.]

the Holy Spirit of God comes to be sent down upon us, to enlighten, direct, and quicken us; how there comes to be such a Mediator between God and men, who is able to bring two parties, that are at such an infinite distance, together, and reconcile them to one another; how the Church was purchased and built upon "a rock," that "the gates of Hell might never prevail against it;" how the Almighty Creator of the world comes to be so infinitely merciful and propitious to fallen men, and not at all to the fallen Angels, although they be both alike His own creatures. But what do I mean to offer at shewing the excellency of that knowledge, which no tongue is able to express? These are contemplations fit for Angels! "The Angels themselves desire to look into them;" and the more they look, the more they admire and wonder. And therefore we may well conclude, that no knowledge that we poor mortals upon earth can have, is worthy to be named with this of knowing "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

[Matt. 16. 18.]

[1 Pet. 1. 12.]

And yet, it is strange to observe, although this knowledge be so high and wonderful, it is, notwithstanding, the most clear and certain of any thing we can ever know; in comparison of which, the knowledge of all other things is generally no more than guess and conjecture: for we are taught this not "of men," or "by men," but of God, and by God Himself, who by His own infallible Spirit, in His own Word, hath revealed to us all things necessary to be known, concerning "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Whereby it comes to pass, that I do not only think, imagine, or suppose, but I am fully assured of the truth of every thing that is there written concerning Him, more than I am of any thing I see, or hear, or understand by discourse and ratiocination: for my senses may deceive me, and so may my reason and understanding; they have often done it: but God can neither be deceived nor deceive. And, therefore, what He saith, although the thing itself be ever so much above my comprehension, I know, I am sure it is true; it cannot but be so. And, therefore, all the knowledge that we have of Christ, being grounded wholly upon God's own Word, it must needs be as certain as it is possible to be; as certain as God Himself can make it.

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And it is very well for us it is so, considering the great use and need we have always of it. I do not deny but that the knowledge of other things is in many cases very useful: some to private persons, some to public societies, some to whole nations, some to mankind in general, some to the right understanding the Scriptures, and so to the knowledge of Christ Himself; yea, there is scarce any kind of knowledge, but some way or other helps towards the raising, the refining, and the enlarging our understandings, and so to the making us more capable of knowing Him. But whatsoever it be at present, unless it tends to that end, at last it will stand us in no stead; for what if I was skilled in all the arts and sciences that ever were invented, and could manage them to the best advantage? What if I had the whole system of logic in my head, and could argue with all the art and cunning that ever man had? What if I could dive into the depth of natural philosophy, and see the several springs and movements of all secondary causes? What if I had turned over all the records of the Church, and the histories of all places and ages since the world began, and could reduce every thing that ever happened to its proper time? What if I could "count the number of the stars, call them all by their names," and describe their motions to an hair's breadth? What if I understood all languages, and could discourse with people of all nations upon earth in their own mother tongue? What then? Notwithstanding all this, without the "knowledge of Jesus Christ" I should be lost and undone for ever. For "there is no name under Heaven, whereby we can be saved, but the name of Christ:" neither is there any way possible to be saved by Him, unless we know Him. For unless we know Him, we can do nothing that is required in order to our being saved by Him.

[Ps. 147. 4.]

[Acts 4. 12.]

In order to our being saved, there are two things required, Repentance and Faith. As for the first, although many excellent arguments may be drawn from the majesty of God's Person, from the severity of His justice, from the glory of His goodness, from the righteousness of His law, from the beauty of holiness, from the odiousness of sin, from the dreadful consequences of it, and from many other topics, which one would think sufficient to persuade any man to

repent and turn to God, yet nothing can do it effectually without the "knowledge of Christ." For after all, it is He that gives repentance, and He never gives it to any but to those who "know Him;" none else being capable of receiving it from Him, but they who "know Him" are in the ready way to have it.

For "to know Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," is in itself the most powerful argument to work in us true repentance. To "know Jesus," the Eternal Son of God, of the same substance with the Father: to "know Jesus," both God and Man in one person: to "know Jesus Christ," the truest Prophet, the greatest King, the highest Priest in the world: to "know Jesus Christ, and Him crucified:" to know how this glorious, this almighty, this Divine Person was abused by His own creatures: how He was apprehended, arraigned, accused, and condemned as a criminal: how He was derided, scourged, spit upon, crowned with thorns, and led among the vilest of malefactors to the place of execution: how He was there fastened to a piece of wood, with nails drove through His blessed hands and feet, the most nervous and sensible parts of the whole body: how He hung in this sad ignominious posture for three long hours together, and all that while endured not only the most exquisite pains that could be imagined in His body; but such a sense of His Father's displeasure in His soul, as made Him cry out "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And how, after all this, the pains of death coming upon Him, the Lord of Life Himself gave up the ghost and died; and died upon the cross, the only cursed death that any man could die. To "know" that Jesus Christ was thus "crucified," and that He was "crucified" thus for the sins of men, and for our sins among the rest: what can, if this doth not, dissolve us all into tears, into tears of true repentance for those sins which were the occasion of it? How can we "know" that Jesus Christ was "crucified" for sin, and not dread the thoughts of God's displeasure against it? How can we know that He was "crucified" for our sins, and not abhor and leave them? Surely it is impossible! It is impossible that our minds should be filled with such a knowledge of Christ as this, and yet retain any love for sin, for any sin whatsoever. And

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2 Pet. 2. 20.

therefore the Apostle saith, "That men escape the pollutions of the world (and so the dominion of all manner of vice), through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" this being the most effectual means to do it, and that which never fails: insomuch, that whosoever lives in any known sin, may be confident that he doth not know Christ as he ought.

And the great reason is, because he who thus "knows Christ," what He hath done and suffered for mankind, cannot but believe and trust on Him, as His only and all-sufficient "Saviour." And he who doth that, is thereby entitled to all the promises of the Gospel, for every thing necessary to his being saved, they being all made to those, and to those only who believe in Christ. Hence it is that we are so often said to be justified by faith, to be saved by faith, to be sanctified by faith, to be purified by faith, to resist the Devil by faith, and to overcome the world by faith. Neither is there any other way whereby it is possible for a man to do it. I speak it confidently, because I have God's own word for it, saying,

1 John 5. 5. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" If there were no other, as there are a great many, this one place of Scripture is sufficient to demonstrate against all the Pelagians, Socinians, Arians and Mahometans in the world, that no man can ever truly overcome it, so as to be and do good in it, except he

[Phil. 4. 13.] believe in Christ. Whereas he who doth this, can "do all things through Christ which strengtheneth Him." But as no man can "know" Christ aright, but he must needs believe in Him; so no man can believe aright in Him, unless he

Rom. 10. 14. first know Him. For "how can he believe in Him of whom he hath not heard," and so doth not know what to believe? And therefore "to know Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," is so useful, so necessary for all men, that no man can be either holy or happy without it.

From hence, by the way, we may observe the great wisdom and piety of our Church, in setting apart certain days every year, whereon to commemorate the most material things relating to our Blessed Saviour, His advent in general, His incarnation, His birth, His circumcision, His manifestation to the Gentiles, His presentation in the Temple, His fasting

forty days, His crucifixion, His resurrection, His ascension into Heaven, His sending the Holy Ghost, and His Evangelists and Apostles, who wrote and propagated His Gospel; which, put together, make up a kind of practical catechism, whereby people are instructed in the knowledge "of Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." And for the same reason she appoints the three Creeds, one to be read every day; another, which is something fuller, every Sunday and holyday; and the third, which is fullest of all, every month throughout the year: in every one of which Creeds, most of the articles are concerning our Blessed Saviour. Which shews the great care the Church hath taken, that all who live in her Communion may be sure to know Him. And accordingly we also, who are entrusted by her with the administration of Christ's Holy Word and Sacraments to them, are bound in duty and conscience to take the same care. It is true, we must tell them of the sins which they ought to avoid, and of the duties they ought to perform to God, and to one another, but we must likewise preach unto them "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified:" otherwise we may preach our hearts out, the people will never be the better for it. For unless they know and believe in Him, they can neither avoid the sins, nor perform the duties we tell them of; and so all our preaching will be in vain, and to no purpose. This we may well be confident of, for St. Paul himself, the great Apostle, was so; as appears from his making this his great, his only care in all his preaching: "I determined not," saith he, "to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

Neither would I have you think, that this is such a dull, insipid doctrine, as some would make it: for "to know Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," is certainly the greatest — the greatest, did I say? Pardon the expression, — it is the only true joy and comfort of our hearts. The knowledge of other things may please our fancies, but this alone can satisfy and delight our souls. For whatsoever we may know besides, I am sure we all know ourselves to be sinners, and if sinners, then liable to the wrath of God, and all the miseries that He can inflict upon us; the thoughts whereof cannot but sometimes make us sad and melancholy, notwithstanding all our

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outward mirth and jollity. But to "know" that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, such sinners as we are: that the Eternal Son of God Himself, by the one oblation of Himself, hath made a "full, perfect and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world," and for ours among the rest: that He was "wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities:" that He was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification: that He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him: that He is now our mediator and advocate in Heaven, always making intercession for us: that His grace is always sufficient for us; His strength is made perfect in our weakness, and His power resteth continually upon us, to guide and assist us while we live, and then to bring us to Himself in glory: this refresheth our drooping spirits: this fills our souls with solid and substantial joy, with joy unspeakable and full of glory: this makes us sing with the Blessed Virgin, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." Give me but this, and let who will take all the pleasures of the world besides, and glory in them: I shall never envy their felicity. "God forbid that I should glory (in any thing,) save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world:" for this, this is the only way to eternal life; yea, this is eternal life, to know "the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent."

[Is. 53. 5.]

[Luke 1. 46.]

[Gal. 6. 14.]

John 17. 3.

And therefore as this is the most excellent, the most certain, the most useful, and the most pleasant: so it is the most lasting knowledge we can ever have, for it is everlasting. It is St. Jerom's advice, *Discamus in terris, quorum nobis scientia perseveret in cælo:* Let us learn those things upon earth, the knowledge whereof will continue with us in Heaven. This is the only knowledge that will do so. When we die, all our other thoughts will perish, but the knowledge of "Jesus Christ, and Him crucified," will go with us into the other world, and there abide by us, yea, there it will be advanced to the highest perfection it is capable of. "Now we see Him through a glass darkly, but then face to face: now we know (Him) in part, but then we

[Hieron. Ep. 53, ad Paulin. de studio SS. § 9, fin.]

1Cor. 13. 12.

shall know (Him,) even as we are known (of Him)." For we shall live with Him, behold His glory, enjoy His blessed company, admire and love Him for ever.

These things being duly weighed, I need not use any other arguments to persuade those who hope and desire in good earnest to be saved, to make it their great care and study to get their minds possessed with as true a knowledge, and as deep a sense of Christ their Saviour, as possibly they can; but shall conclude this, as St. Peter doth his Second Epistle.

"Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness: but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory, both now and for ever," Amen. [2 Pet. 3. 17, 18.]

SERMON XIX.

THE NEW CREATURE IN CHRISTIANITY.

2 Corinthians v. 17.

Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature.

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[1 Tim. 1. 15; 2. 6.] [Heb. 2. 9; 1 John 2. 2.]

Although it be certain from God's own Word, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, that He gave Himself a ransom for all, that He tasted death for every man, and that He is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world; yet it is certain also, that there are many sinners in the world which shall not be saved by Him: yea, we have just cause to fear, that but few will be so; few, not in themselves absolutely considered, but few in comparison of the many more that will be damned, notwithstanding all that He hath done and suffered for them. But this cannot possibly be imputed to any defect in His power, who is Almighty to save; nor yet to any want of will and readiness in Him, who "died for all," and would have "all men to be saved," and to "come to the knowledge of the truth." Where then can the fault lie? It can be nowhere but in men themselves; they will not, and then it is no wonder if they shall not be saved. Though Christ hath procured it, yet He doth not force Salvation upon men, whether they will or no; but He leads them to it in a way suitable to their own nature, as they were made by Him reasonable and free agents, capable of knowing and choosing what is good for themselves, and of refusing what they know to be otherwise. It cost Him dear to purchase Salvation for them, nothing less than His own most precious blood; and therefore He is pleased freely to offer and propound it to

[1 Tim. 2. 4.]

them in His Gospel, if they will accept of it: but if they will not have it, but refuse and slight it, chusing and preferring the things of this world before it, they can blame nobody but themselves, when they come to see their mistake and folly. And yet this is the case of most men. What Christ Himself once said to the Jews, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life," the same may be said to the greatest part of mankind, and of them also who profess to believe in Him, and to hope for life and Salvation from Him; yet they will not come unto Him for it: for some are so self-willed, that they will not go out of themselves, nor be beholden to Him for their Salvation; others wilfully shut their eyes, and will not see the way that leads to Him; and of those who have their eyes opened, that they cannot choose but see it, whether they will or no, yet many will not walk in it, they have their trades to mind, or their land to till, they have families to provide for, and bodies to look after. These are things they are sensible of, as being present with them; as for their future state, that is a thing remote and out of sight, and therefore they never trouble their heads about that, so long as they can find any thing else to do, which is commonly so long as they live: and if they ever chance to think of it, as sometimes perhaps they may, they bethink themselves also that they are Christians, they were baptized long ago, and never renounced their Baptism, but still continue members of Christ, believing that He is the Saviour of the world, and that He hath done so much to save them, that He hath left no great matter for them to do. As for Jews, and Turks, and Heathens, they pity their condition, as being without the pale of the Church, and so without any hopes of Salvation: but as for their parts, they are Christians, and are resolved to live and die so, and never to profess any other religion, but that which Christ hath settled in the world; and therefore doubt not but whatsoever becomes of other, they shall be saved. John 5. 40.

This is the language, or at least, these are the thoughts of most of those who profess to believe in Christ; they profess to do so, and that is all, concerning themselves no more about Christ, than the Turks do about Mahomet, the Indians about Braman, or the Jews about Moses; they look upon

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Him as the founder of their religion, and do not question but that He hath taught them the right way to Heaven, and therefore hope to go thither when they die, without taking any more care about it. And that is the great reason, why of so many who profess to believe in Christ, there are so few who are saved by Him: whereas, if they really did what they profess to do, even believe in Christ aright, as He hath taught them in the Gospel, they could not but be saved. But then they would find the Christian religion quite another thing than what they imagined it to be: it would make such a mighty change and alteration in them, that they would be another kind of creatures than what others are, or they themselves ever were before. For if they truly believed in Christ, they would be in Him; and the Apostle here tells us, that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" old things are passed away, "behold all things are become new in Him." And to the same purpose

Gal. 6. 15.

he saith elsewhere, that "in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature," or, as the word, I think, may be more properly rendered in this place, "a new creation," for the Greek word κτίσις signifies both creation and creature; and the context here seems to require it to be taken in the active sense, because circumcision and uncircumcision are so: but the meaning of the whole is still the same, even that whether a man be circumcised or not circumcised, whether he do or do not enjoy such outward rites and privileges, he is neither the better nor the worse; the only thing necessary in the Christian religion, is "the new creation." If a man be not created anew, whatsoever he hath or hath not, it is all one, he is no true Christian, he doth not truly believe in Christ; for if he did, he would be "a new creature:" and so the word must of necessity be understood in my text, not of the act, but subject; for the Apostle here speaks of the person that is in Christ, and saith, that he "is a new creature," which therefore cannot possibly be understood of the act of creation, but the thing created: "If any man," saith he, "be in Christ, he is a new creature."

In which words, we shall first consider the terms, and then the truth asserted in them: the terms to be explained are

two, as in all such propositions, the subject and the predicate, "what it is to be in Christ," and then, "what it is to be a new creature." As for the first, it is a phrase which the Holy Ghost delights often to use; and therefore I could never persuade myself, but that there is something particular and more remarkable in it, than what is commonly taken notice of: I shall not recite the many places where it occurs, but such only from whence the meaning of it may be gathered. "There is therefore," saith the Apostle, "now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus:" from whence we may conclude, that they are said to be in Christ, who are not only in His Church, but in His Person, so as to be really vested and interested in Him, in His merits, for the pardon of their sins, and in His righteousness, whereby they may be justified, or accounted righteous before God; for otherwise they could not but be condemned. To the same purpose, the same Apostle having recounted his own privileges and righteousness which he had in the law, he saith, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ." Where we may observe, that he reckons his being in Christ, no common or ordinary thing, but the greatest blessing he could ever have, and he expresseth it several ways: first, by his winning Christ, ἵνα Χριστὸν κερδήσω, that I may win or gain Christ to myself, that He may be mine, my Saviour, my Redeemer, my Lord, as he here calls Him: and then he adds, "That I may be found in Him." In Him! How? by having His righteousness; that I may be "found," saith he, "in Him, not having mine own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ." Which shews plainly, that he desired to be found in Christ, so as to have the righteousness of Christ to be his righteousness, that he might be accounted righteous by it; which could not be, unless it was his own: and therefore, by being in Christ, he can mean nothing less than such an union to Him, whereby a man is

Rom. 8. 1.

Phil. 3. 7-9.

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reckoned as one with Him, and so hath a real interest in whatsoever is in Him.

There are many such places in the Holy Scriptures, whereby this notion of our being in Christ might be confirmed; but I shall rather choose at present to explain it by that similitude which Christ Himself is pleased to make use of for that purpose, where He saith to His Disciples, "Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches." From whence it appears, that we are said to be in Christ, as a branch is in the vine; but a branch is so in the vine, as to be really a part or member of it, and to partake of all the nourishment, the sap and juice, and whatsoever is in the stock, it is by secret conveyances carried into the branches, so that every branch hath as much of it as it can hold, and as is necessary to preserve its life, and make it fruitful: and therefore, according to this, which is Christ's own similitude, all that are in Him, are so in Him, as to participate of whatsoever is in Him, so far as they are capable of it. But you will say, perhaps, the branch is naturally in the vine, so as to spring out of it, but we are not so in Christ, and therefore the analogy doth not hold good; but the Apostle clears this difficulty, by shewing, that we are in Christ as a branch is in a tree, that is, not naturally propagated with it, but inoculated and graffed into it: "And if some," saith he, "of the branches be broken off, and thou being a wild olive-tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive-tree." Now, as we take a scion of one tree, and graft it into the stock of another, by that incision it soon becomes of the same body with that into which it is grafted, as if it had naturally sprouted from it, and partakes, as the Apostle speaks, of "the root and fatness" of the stock, as much as the natural branches do: so here, by nature we are all of the old stock, the wild olive, Adam; God, "the husbandman," as our Saviour calls Him in this very case, He cuts off from the old stock, and grafts us "into Christ," the "true vine;" by which means we are, as it were, incorporated into Him, and so partake of what is in Him, as much as if we had proceeded from Him, as we did from the first man,

John 15. 4. 5.

Rom. 11. 17.

and in some sense more; forasmuch as we are joined to Adam only by nature, but to Christ by the Holy Spirit Himself: for, as the Apostle saith, "He that is joined unto the Lord, is one Spirit," which must needs be the highest kind of union that can be imagined. In short, take it thus; our whole nature, and so we ourselves who are of it, being in the first Adam, we were really concerned in every thing that he did, or that was done to him; we sinned in him, we were corrupted in him, we were cursed and condemned in him; and so Christ also having taken our whole nature upon Him, and being thereby become, as He is called, the second, or another Adam, as all are capable of it, so they who are really in Him are really concerned and interested in all that He did or suffered in our nature; "in Him" they are sanctified, "in Him" they fulfilled all righteousness, "in Him" they suffered the death which God had threatened against them; and so in Him they are absolved from their sins, and justified before God. 1 Cor. 6. 17.

But is there nothing required on our parts, in order to our being thus taken out of the first, and put into the second man, even Christ, so as to be found in Him? Yes, doubtless, it is required that we truly believe in Him; for He Himself saith, that "whosoever believeth in Him shall not perish, but have everlasting life," and therefore they who do not "believe in Him," must needs perish: which they would not do if they were in Him: and they who do believe in Him, must needs be in Him, otherwise they could not have everlasting life, that being to be had only in Him; whereas by believing in Him, they partake of Him, and in Him of all things necessary in order to it: for, as the Apostle saith, "we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end," that is, if we begin and continue steadfastly to believe God and trust in Christ, we are thereby made partakers of Him, and interested in Him. And He who is thus in Christ, as the Apostle here saith, is "a new creature." John 3. 16. Heb. 3. 14.

But "a new creature," how can that be? As Nicodemus said, How can a man be "born when he is old?" so may others say, with more show of reason, Can a thing that is once created, be created again? No surely, not as to the [John 3. 4.]

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substance or essence of it, that cannot be created again; but, howsoever, the form and qualities of it may be so changed and altered, that it may be quite another thing than what it was at first created, and therefore may properly be called "a new creature." As the body of a man, at first, was not properly created or produced out of nothing, but was made of the dust of the ground, which was created before, yet it being formed by God out of that dust, and inspired with the breath of life, he is properly called God's creature: so although a man's soul and body are not raised again out of nothing, yet, if he be raised out of a state of sin, and inspired with the Holy Spirit of God Himself, he may be as truly said to be a "new creature," this being so great a change, that he is altogether another man than what he was before, for he is now "transformed by the renewing of his mind." Yea, as the Apostle saith in my text, "old things are past away, behold all things are become new." Though he be the same person he was before, yet he doth not understand, or judge, or think, or will, or affect, or speak, or act as he did before. He hath now a new sense of things, a new judgment, new desires, new hopes, new fears, new loves, new hatred, new joys, new griefs, and so leads a new life; for he hath "put off the old man, with his deeds, and hath put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him;" or, as it is elsewhere expressed, "He hath put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." Where we may observe, that as man was at first, so this new man, "created" again after God, or after the image of God, consisting "in righteousness and true holiness;" which is the proper form of the "new man," and from whence he may therefore be properly called "a new creature." But for our clearer understanding of this, it will be necessary to take a short view of a man in both his states, in his unregenerate and his regenerate state, as he was born at first, and as he is born again; or, if ye will, as he is in the "first," and as he is in the "second" Adam: by which we may easily discern what a mighty change is wrought in him, and how properly he may therefore be called "a new creature."

Rom. 12. 2.

Col. 3. 9, 10.

Eph. 4. 24.

First; As for the "old man," the man that is still such as

he was born; as he was born, so he lives continually in sin: his mind and conscience is defiled, and all the powers of his soul disordered and out of tune; he was born blind, and so he lives always in the dark, having no light at all, except perhaps a little glimmering that may sometimes come through his senses; he may talk and discourse, but he sees no more of God, or any spiritual object, than as if there was no such thing in being. And, therefore, he is wholly under the power of his senses and passions, being affected with nothing but what toucheth and moveth them one way or other. Hence he is often entirely given up to the most brutal vices, as gluttony, drunkenness, whoredom, or the like: or if he happen to be any way free from them, by reason of the temper of his body, or by the outward circumstances of his life, yet these other sins, which the Apostle reckons also as parts of the old man, "anger, malice, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies," and the like; these have all, or most of them, absolute dominion over him. He looks no further than this world, and therefore his mind is bent altogether upon the pleasures, or the honours, or the riches which he fancies in it, and doth all he can to get them, not regarding how. Lying, and cheating, and oppressing, and slandering, and extorting from others, or forswearing himself, he seldom boggles at; neither would he ever stick at theft, robbery, forgery, or murder itself, but only for fear the law might take hold of him: or if he avoids any of the other sins, it is only lest he should lose his credit, and so his hopes of gaining in the world. He avoids no sin purely out of conscience, for he hath none; much less for fear of God's displeasure, for he never thinks of him, as the Psalmist saith, "God is not in all his thoughts." He may sometimes speak of God, and often doth it on purpose to blaspheme and profane His holy name; but he never hath the true "fear of God before his eyes," no, not when he comes into His special presence. As for any private devotions to Him, he is usually a perfect stranger to them, not knowing what they mean, or how to go about them if he would; or if he hath been over-persuaded by his parents and others to be now and then in his closet, or by himself, he reads or prays in such a careless and superficial manner, as shews that he doth it only out of

Col. 3. 8; Gal. 5. 20, 21.

Ps. 10. 4.

[Ps. 36. 1.]

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custom, or that he might be thought religious, not out of any sense of his duty, or desire to serve or please God in it. And as for the Church, if he happens to live in a place where his neighbours go thither on the "Lord's Day," it would look very ill if he did not do so too: he had much rather follow his worldly business, but the laws of the land will not suffer him to do that openly; and if he should sit still at home and do nothing, his neighbours might take notice of him, and look upon him to be as he is, a wicked and "profane person:" and therefore, once a week, to be even with them, he'll walk gravely to mass, or a private meeting, and perhaps carry his family along with him; and then he hopes they will look upon him as more religious than themselves; or if they will not, howsoever he himself will think so, and that is enough for him. And if he goes really to "Church," where the public worship of God is duly and solemnly performed, it is true, he is there in the right way to have his eyes opened, but until they are so, it is all one where he is: though he can make a shift to tarry here all the while, and perhaps kneel, and stand up, and repeat as others do, it is only because others do so; for his part, he is no ways affected with any thing that is done here, the whole service is a kind of dull, insipid business, that he can find no relish at all in, his mind running all the while about other matters; and as for the Word read or preached, it makes no more impression upon him, than it doth upon the stones of the wall, or the seat he sits on. And if any good thoughts happen to be put in his mind, he gets them out again as fast as he can, that he may not be troubled with them: and that is generally his business the rest of the "Lord's Day." But for going to "Church" upon the week days, that he looks upon as a very idle, impertinent thing, fit only for lazy people, that have nothing else to do; for his part, he hath greater affairs to mind. The same opinion he hath too of the "Lord's Supper:" it is three to one whether he ever received the "Holy Sacrament" in his life, unless it was to qualify himself for some office, or to keep himself out of the reach of the law. For such purposes he may think it convenient to receive it "two" or "three" times in a year, but he cannot find any time to prepare himself for it, and

so it signifies no more to him than his ordinary food. And thus the poor man lives, as "without God in the world," and so he will do all his life, unless he be renewed and born again. [Eph. 2. 12.]

But now let us suppose him to be so, to be so renewed and "born again" of God's Holy Spirit; that he is become a "new man:" what a wonderful alteration is wrought in him! He is now in all respects another kind of "creature" than what he was before: his mind is purified, his "conscience purged from dead works," and all his faculties reduced to their proper order: he is turned "from darkness to light," and from the "power of Satan unto God:" his eyes are opened, so that he can look at those things which "are not seen:" he sets "God always before him," and beholds His wisdom, His power, His goodness, His mercy, and all His glory shining continually about him, and in him; whereby his whole soul is inflamed with love unto Him with longing after Him, with rejoicing in Him, and is always fixed, "trusting on the Lord:" he lives now "by faith," and not "by sense;" and therefore all sensible objects seem to him what they are in themselves, as little and low, yea, "as nothing" in comparison of those great, and high, and spiritual, and most glorious objects that he is always conversing with. Hence it is that he doth not only avoid the more gross and notorious, but all manner of sin, to the utmost of his power; not out of any by-respects, but because it is sin, or a transgression of God's Law, and an offence to Him whom he loves above all things in the world. And therefore open and secret sins are all alike to him, they are equally the objects of his hatred and abhorrence: he dare no more cheat his neighbour in his shop, than he dare rob him upon the high way: he will murder as soon as wrong him in his name, body, or estate; that is, he will do neither, though he was sure to gain all this world by it: for all this world is nothing to him; his hopes and expectations are all in the other world: "his treasure is there," and therefore "his heart is there also." The good things of this world, though he hath them, yet he doth not mind them any farther than to employ them, so as to give a good account of them another day. His main business is to live always in the [Heb. 9. 14.] [Acts 26. 18.] [2 Cor. 4. 18.] [Ps. 16. 8.] [2 Cor. 5. 7.] [Matt. 6. 21.]

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"true faith and fear of God," and so under His care and protection: for which purpose he is as constant at his daily devotions, as he is at his daily food, and at any time had rather lose his dinner than omit his prayers; and when he is in his closet, he is as careful what he saith or doth, as if all the world saw him, as knowing that He who made all the world doth see. Besides his private, he is glad of any opportunities he can get of performing his public devotions to God every day, prizing them above all the blessings of this life: he never fears losing any thing by serving God, but always expects, as well he may, to get more at Church than he can at home: he doth not use to ride out of town, or take physic, or do any other business upon the Lord's Day, but only the business of the day. He prepares himself for it at home, and when he comes to Church, as be sure he always doth, he sets himself in good earnest about it, as the greatest work of his whole life. When he prays, he prostrates himself before Almighty God, with all the reverence and godly fear, that he can possibly express both in mind and body, lifting up his heart, together with his hands, to Him that "dwelleth in the Heavens:" when he praises God in the Psalms or Hymns, he doth it "lustily, with a good courage;" his whole soul, as well as body, being raised up to the highest pitch in admiring, adoring, magnifying that Almighty and All-glorious Being that is so infinitely above him, and yet so infinitely gracious and merciful to him. When he heareth God's Word read, he receiveth it, "not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the Word of God," which "effectually worketh in them who believe:" when the same Word is expounded or preached to him, he hearkens diligently to it, he seriously considers God's will and pleasure in it, he applies it to himself, resolving by Christ's assistance to believe and live according to it; and accordingly doth so all the rest of his life. He is sound, orthodox, and steadfast in the faith, not "tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine," but keeping close to the faith which was "once delivered to the Saints," and hath been ever since professed by the Catholic Church. He is sincerely devout and pious towards God, making it his great care to serve, honour, and please Him: he is meek and lowly in

[1 Thes. 2. 13.]

[Eph. 4. 14.]

[Jude 3.]

his own eyes, modest, sober, and temperate in all things: he is true and faithful to his word, just and righteous in his dealings, kind and charitable to the poor, as far as his estate will bear: he "honours all men, loves the brotherhood, fears God, honours the king." In short, he endeavours all he can to walk in all the Commandments and Ordinances of the Lord blameless: and if he chance to stumble, he gets up again immediately, and walks more circumspectly for the future. For which purpose he receives the mystical body and blood of his ever-blessed Redeemer, as oft as possibly he can, whereby his faith is confirmed in Him, and he derives so much grace and virtue from Him, that he can "do all things through Christ which strengthens him." This is the life, "the new life" he constantly leads, and therefore he may well be termed, as he is in my text, "a new creature."

[1 Pet. 2. 17.]

[Luke 1.6.]

[Phil. 4. 13.]

The terms being thus explained, what is to be "in Christ," and what it is to be "a new creature;" we are now to consider the dependence that one of them hath upon the other, and so the truth of this proposition, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature:" which deserves to be duly considered, because at first sight it may seem to contradict the common observation, that Christians are as bad as other men; and that all manner of vice and wickedness reigns as much in Christendom, as it doth in Turkey, or either of the Indies. And it must be confessed to our shame and sorrow, that the observation is not more commonly made, than it is generally true; the greatest part of those who are called Christians, being as far from being "new" and holy "creatures," as they who never yet heard of Christ. The truth is, and it is a sad truth, men usually embrace and profess the Christian religion, no otherwise than Turks do the Mahometan, or other infidels the religions of their respective countries, only because it is the religion of their country; it was transmitted to them from their ancestors, it is now settled among them, and professed by those they daily converse with; and that is the reason why they also profess it: and then it is no wonder that they are but like other men, when they take up their religion merely by chance, without ever looking any further into it, or considering the mighty advantages it

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affords them, whereby to become the best and happiest of all creatures.

But we must observe withal, that, as the Apostle saith, Rom. 9. 6. "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel." Rom. 2. 28, 29. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God." So it is here; all are not "in Christ," that are "of Him," or His religion; neither is he truly a "Christian," that is so "outwardly," by the mere profession of the "Christian faith;" but he is truly "a Christian," that is so "inwardly," in his heart, whereby he really believes in Christ, and so partakes of that Holy Spirit that is in Him for his sanctification, as well as of His merit, for his justification before God; being taken out, as it were, from the first Adam, and joined by faith unto the second: for this, as I have shewn, is the proper meaning of this phrase in my text, of our being "in Christ." And whatsoever others are, who only profess His religion, he who is thus in "Christ," must needs be "a new creature;" for as the Apostle saith, Eph. 2. 10. "He is created in Christ Jesus unto good works," being "in Him," he is created "anew in Him;" and this new creation is to good works. This is the end of it, that he may do good works, which he could never do, except he was in Christ; whereas by being "in Him," he is fully enabled to do them: as Christ Himself assures us, whose words are much to be observed in this case; and therefore we shall briefly consider them here, as we did before in part upon another occasion.

John 15. 1, 2. His words are these: First, saith He, "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He taketh away; and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit." Where we may observe, that He speaks of the very thing we are now upon, even of "our being in Him." And the better to explain it to us, He compares "Himself" to a "vine," His "Father" to an "husbandman," and His "Disciples" to the "branches of a vine," which are all members of it, and receive nourishment and strength

from it to bear fruit. Now He saith, that "every branch in Him that beareth not fruit, His Father," as the husbandman, "taketh it away:" which is not to be so understood, as if any fruitless branch was really "in Him," but only that it seemed to be so. According as He Himself explains Himself in a parallel case; in one place He saith, "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." How can that be? How can a man both have and not have? And how can he that hath nothing, have any thing taken from him? This looks like a contradiction; but He Himself clears it in another place, by saying, "Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have." Which shews, that by His saying before, "what he hath," His meaning was, that he seemed to have it, but really had it not. So here, "every branch in Me," that is, "every branch that" seemeth to be in Me, and "beareth not fruit, He taketh away," so that it shall not so much as seem to be in Him. For that this is the proper meaning of the place, appears from what follows; "I," saith He, "am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without Me ye can do nothing." For hence it is manifest, that as no man can do any good without Him, so no man can abide really "in Him," but he brings forth much fruit, and therefore "is a new creature."

Matt. 13. 12. Luke 8. 18. Ver. 5.

To the same purpose is that of His beloved Disciple, where speaking of Christ, he saith, "Whosoever abideth in Him, sinneth not;" that is, such a one doth not live in any known sin, nor by consequence in the neglect of any duty. And the reason is, because "they that are Christ's, have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Their "old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth they should not serve sin." If the "old man" be crucified with Him, they must become "new men," or nothing at all, "in Him." If the body of sin be destroyed, the body of grace must be formed in them. And if they cease to serve sin, they must serve God, it being a sin not to serve Him. And if they serve Him, they must do whatsoever He sets them. And that they must needs do who are "in Christ;" for if they be in Him, they are in

1 John 3. 6. Gal. 5. 24. Rom. 6. 6.

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the true vine, and therefore must needs bring forth good grapes. They are in the fountain of all goodness, and
Col. 1. 19. therefore must needs be good: they dwell in Him in whom all fulness dwells, and therefore of "His fulness" they must
John 1. 16. needs receive, "and grace for grace;" that is, all manner of grace requisite to their doing of all the good that God requireth of them. As St. Paul found by experience, when
Phil. 4. 13. he said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." And he who can do that, must needs be "a new creature."

But to make it still more plain, we must consider, that Christ is the Eternal, the only-begotten Son of God; and therefore they who are "in Him," by a quick and lively
John 1. 12. faith, they also "in Him" are made the sons of God. "For as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe in His name." And if they be the sons of God, they are "born again" of God Himself; if born again, they are "new men;" and if born again of God the Creator, they must needs be "new creatures," and lead new lives, as being acted by the same Spirit by which they were born again, the Spirit of God Himself; which by means of their union to Christ, and being made members of His body, is infused into them, and becomes a principle of new life in them; whereby they are enabled to answer the full character of "a new creature," much better than I have or can express it. And therefore we may well conclude with the Apostle, that "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."

Now from this great doctrine, thus briefly explained, among many other things which are very remarkable, we may observe, first, that no man can be "a new creature," except he be "in Christ;" for the Apostle here makes our being "in Christ," the foundation of "the new creation." He doth not say, If a man be a Peripatetic, a Platonist, an Epicurean, Pythagorean, or any other kind of philosopher, he "is a new creature:" neither doth he say, If a man be of the Church of Rome, or of the Church of England, a Lutheran, or a Calvinist, he is therefore "a new creature." But, "if a man be in Christ, he is a new creature;" therefore "a new creature," as I have shewn, because he is "in

Christ." Which is a thing much to be observed, for it quite overthrows that absurd opinion, which some have entertained, that a man may be saved in any religion, if he doth but live up to the light of nature, and according to the rules of that religion which he professeth, be it what it will. For it is plain from what we have discoursed upon this subject, that no man can be saved, except he be within the pale of the Church, except he be of the Christian religion; nor in that neither, except he be really "in Christ," and so a "true Christian." For otherwise he cannot be "a new creature;" and if he be not "a new creature," if he be not regenerate and born again, and so made the son of God, he can never inherit eternal life: he cannot receive "inheritance among them who are sanctified by faith in Christ," unless he himself be so. Whereas men may cry up the light of nature, and the power of natural religion, as much as they please, they may as well undertake to create a new world, as to make "a new creature" by it. They may exclaim against vice, and extol virtue as much as it deserves, and perhaps make a shift to do something that looks well by the principles of moral philosophy; but they may as soon produce any thing out of nothing, as turn a man "from darkness to light," and "from the power of Satan unto God" by it: yea, they may be admitted into the Christian religion itself, they may make a plausible profession of it, they may do many things in it, but they can no more make themselves "new creatures," than they could make themselves "creatures." That can be done only by the Almighty power of God; and He never exerts that power, but only "in Him" by whom He created all things. And therefore, unless a man be "in Him," even in Christ Jesus, he may be confident he is not "a new creature."

[Acts 26. 18.]

[Acts 26. 18.]

Again, we may observe from hence, that as he who is not "in Christ," is not "a new creature;" so on the other side, he who is not "a new creature," is not "in Christ:" for the Apostle saith expressly, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." And therefore men may pretend what they will, and make what show they can of Christ's religion, they may be baptized into His name, and continue members of His Church: they may profess to believe in Him as their

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only Saviour, to serve and honour Him as their Lord and Master: they may undertake to argue and dispute for Him, to vindicate and defend Him against His enemies: they may pray unto Him, they may read and hear His Word, they may admire His Divine sayings, they may reverence His Ministers, they may approach to His very table; and yet after all, unless they become "new creatures," they have nothing to do with Him: they do not truly believe, and so have no part or interest in Him. For they are not "in Him," and so have no ground to expect any thing at all from Him.

This is a thing which I heartily wish ye would all take special notice of, and remember as long as ye live. For they who are born and bred where the Gospel is planted, and Christ is often spoken of as the only Saviour of the world, they are apt to expect great things from Him; and indeed they cannot expect more, nor so much as He can do for them. But then ye must consider, that unless ye be sanctified, and made "new creatures" by Him, so as to walk constantly in newness of life, you are no way concerned in any thing that He hath done and suffered for mankind. For you are not engrafted into Him, the true vine, nor made sound members of that body whereof He is head. If ye were, ye could not but be influenced by Him, and receive that virtue from Him, which would turn all things upside down in you, and make you quite other men than what you used to be; you would live continually in the fear of God; you would love and honour Him above all things in the world; you would serve and glorify Him with your whole souls and bodies too. And unless you be thus "renewed in the spirit of your minds," so as sincerely to endeavour all ye can to please God; whatsoever pretences you make to Christ, as your Lord and Saviour, ye may be sure He will never save you, nor bring you to Heaven. He hath told you so with His own mouth, and therefore ye may believe Him; saying, "Not every one that saith unto Me, Lord, Lord! shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven." From whence we may also see the truth and certainty of this observation; for all that are "in Christ," are sure to go to Heaven: the

[Eph. 4. 23.]

Matt. 7. 21.

members must needs be where the Head is. But none, it seems, can go thither, but only such as are made "new creatures," so as to do the whole will of God. And by consequence, all that are not such, may be confident they are not "in Christ," they are no true Christians, whatsoever they may pretend.

And this suggests unto me another thing very observable from these words, even what a miserable condition they are in, who are not converted and made "new creatures?" For such, as the Apostle speaks, are "without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." [Eph. 2. 12.] And how miserable must they needs be, who are in such a condition as this: they are without Christ, no more concerned in Him, than as if He had never come into the world: they are aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, foreigners to the true Church of God; they have no portion or inheritance in it, as not being naturalised and made free denizens of it: they are "strangers to the covenant of promise," having no interest in any of the promises that God made to mankind in the new Covenant: they have no ground to hope for any mercy at the hands of God: they are "without God in the world," without His grace and favour, without His particular care and protection; and all because they are not "in Christ," in whom alone the Church is founded, in whom alone the new Covenant is established; in whom alone all the mercy we can ever hope for is promised; and in whom alone God ever was, or ever will be gracious and merciful to any man.

Consider this, all ye that are still in your sins, that have not yet "put off the old man," that do not truly believe in Christ, so as to be made "new creatures" by Him: consider this I say, and then bethink yourselves, whether your condition be not as bad as bad can be. I do not deny but that ye may live at present in ease and plenty, your shops or barns may be full of all manner of store, your estates may be great, your credit good, your bodies healthful, and your hearts merry; and so perhaps ye may continue some time: but what's all this, when in the meanwhile the Almighty Creator and Governor of the World is angry and displeased [Eph. 4. 22.]

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with you; and though He gives you these seeming blessings, makes them real curses to you? for He hath pronounced all [Gal. 3. 10.] accursed, who continue not in all things which He hath commanded; which curse can never be taken off from any, but such as are "in Christ," who bare it for them: but you are not "in Christ," and therefore "the curse of God is upon you," and upon all ye have; and whether ye see it or no, as yet, one day you will see it whether ye will or no. You are cursed in every thing ye have; every thing ye have, serving only to expose you to more temptations, and so to greater misery; you are cursed in every thing ye do; every thing ye do being an offence to God, and so incensing His wrath Prov. 21. 4. and indignation more against you: "The ploughing of the 15. 8. wicked is sin," and his very "sacrifice an abomination to the Lord." Ye are cursed wheresoever ye are; for wheresoever ye are, all the judgments, the dreadful judgments, which God hath threatened in His Word against sinners, hang over your heads, ready every moment to fall upon you, and the longer they are in falling, the more heavily they will fall at last: fall they will at last, as certainly as God hath said it; ye do not know how soon, but may be sure it is not long, but ye will find by sad experience, what a fearful thing it is [Heb. 10. 31.] "to fall into the hands of the living God;" who, ere long, will summon you to appear before His tribunal, and there [Matt. 25. 41.] condemn you to that everlasting fire which is "prepared for the Devil and his angels," where there is nothing but [Matt. 8. 12.] "weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth;" where the [Mark 9. 44.] "worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" where ye will be punished with "everlasting destruction from the [2 Thess. 1. 9.] presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power;" where ye will live with the fiends of Hell, and fare only as they do; where all the furies of your own guilty consciences will be let loose upon you, and torment you continually with [Rev. 16. 1.] the remembrance of your former sins; where all the "vials of God's wrath" will be poured out upon you, and your souls will be filled with the frightful apprehensions of it, as full as they are able to hold; where ye will have no light, no joy, no ease, nothing but darkness and horror, pain and anguish both in body and mind, to the utmost extremity: and all this, not for some months, or years, or ages only, but

for ever and ever. This is the true state of their case, who live and die as they were born, in sin: God grant that none here present may find it so by their own experience; but I am sure there is no way possible to avoid it, but only by Jesus Christ, nor by Him neither, except ye believe in Him, so as to be made "new creatures" by Him: which I heartily wish ye would consider, before it be too late; then ye would need no other argument to persuade you to "put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and to put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eph. 4. 22. 24.

Howsoever, to excite you the more to it, I desire you to consider also, on the other hand, how happy they are who are "in Christ," who are taken out of the first, and made true members of the second Adam, who in him are created unto good works, and so made "new creatures:" these are as happy as the other are miserable, as happy as God Himself can make them; for in that they are "in Christ," in Him they have all things that can any way possibly conduce to make them happy. In Him they have infinite merit, whereby their sins are all pardoned and done away, as if they had never been guilty of any: in Him they have most perfect righteousness, whereby they are truly accounted righteous by the most righteous Judge of the whole world: in Him they have all the graces of God's Holy Spirit to make them like Himself, holy in all manner of conversation: in Him they have wisdom to direct them in all their ways, and power to protect them against all their enemies: in Him Almighty God Himself is well pleased with them, and become their Friend, yea, their most loving and indulgent Father: in Him they have all the blessings that He hath purchased for them with His own most precious blood; that is, all they can ever want or desire to make them completely blessed.

Wherefore, if there be any such among you at this time, as I hope there are, give me leave, in a few terms, to congratulate your happy state both in this world and the next. What your condition is, as to the things of this world, I know not; but this I know, that whatsoever it is, it is the

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best, the happiest you can be in: yea, God Himself knows it, otherwise He would never have brought you into it; for He hath that special love for His own children, as all "new creatures" are, that He suffers nothing to befall them that can do them hurt, nothing but what shall one way or other do them good. If the good things of this life be good for you, you shall have them; if they be not, ye shall not have them, for that only reason, because it is better for you to be without them: so that you may rest fully satisfied in your minds, that all things work together for your good; and that nothing can, or ever did befall you since your new birth, but what was, and shall be, a blessing to you. You are blessed in all you have, for it all comes from the special love and favour of God to you; you are blessed in all ye do, for it is all acceptable to God, through Him in whom ye are; you are blessed wheresoever ye are, for God is always present with you, to guide, assist, and comfort you; you are blessed in your souls, blessed in your bodies, blessed in your going out, blessed in your coming in, blessed while ye live, and blessed when ye die; for "blessed are the dead which die in the Lord: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them." You will then rest from your labours, from every thing that is troublesome or uneasy to you, from every thing that can any way interrupt or disturb your peace and quiet; and your works, and all the good works ye now do in Christ, in Him shall be then rewarded with an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that "fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you." Where ye will live with Him, in whom ye now are, and behold the glory which the Father hath given Him; where "in Him," your souls shall become the spirits of "just men made perfect;" where, in Him, your bodies shall be fashioned "like unto His glorious body;" where, in Him, your whole man shall be advanced to the highest degree of bliss and happiness, that ye are or can be made capable of; where, in Him, ye shall see God face to face, and enjoy all those infinite perfections which are in Him; where, in Him, ye shall thus live in light, in glory, in joy itself, not only now and then, but continually; not for some time only, but to all eternity.

Rev. 14. 13.

1 Pet. 1. 4.

[Heb. 12. 23.]

[Phil. 3. 21.]

Now, if these things be so, as be sure they are, who would not be "in Christ?" Who would not become a "new creature?" And blessed be God, which of us may not, if He will? Christ died for all, and therefore is ready to receive all that come unto Him; He Himself hath said, "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." Let us therefore now take Him at His word, let us go unto Him, and close with Him upon the terms He hath propounded in His Holy Gospel; and for that purpose let us walk constantly in all those ways that lead towards Him. Let us fast, and watch, and pray, and read, and hear, and meditate upon His Holy Word, and receive His mystical body and blood; so that "we may dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we may be one with Christ, and Christ with us." But all the while let us still believe and trust on Him, to "create in us a clean heart, and to renew a right spirit within us;" to crucify our old man, and to make us "new creatures," creatures after His own heart; and to keep us always firm and steadfast in His true faith and fear; that we may both live and die in Him, our dear and ever-blessed Redeemer, the eternal, the only-begotten Son of God: "To whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, for ever and ever."

John 6. 37.

[Ps. 51. 10.]

SERMON XX.

THE NATURE AND ETERNITY OF HEAVEN'S JOYS AND HELL'S TORMENTS.

MATT. XXV. 46.

And these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal.

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As Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of mankind, without whom no man ever was, or can be saved, but by whom many are saved in all ages, from the beginning to the end of the world; so, at the end of the world, He, the same Jesus, will be the Judge of all mankind, and pass a final irrevocable sentence upon every man, woman, and child that ever lived upon the face of the earth: according to which, He Himself here tells us, "These," even the wicked, "shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

Now, we being all in the number of those who shall then be judged by Him, it highly concerns us to understand as much as we can of this, which the Judge Himself saith will be the issue and effect of all His proceedings upon that day; that, if we have any regard to our future state, we may accordingly provide for it, whilst we live in this present world: for which purpose it will be necessary to look back upon what goes before, that we may see how these words come in, and so may be the better able to discern both the design and meaning of them.

Our Saviour, therefore, when He was upon earth, knowing how strict an account all men must give to Him at the Last Day, and being unwilling that any should be

surprised or taken unawares, took all occasions to forewarn them of it, and to acquaint them with all things necessary for them to know concerning it. Among other things, He here tells us, that "when the Son of Man shall come in His Glory, and all the Holy Angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the Throne of His Glory;" whereby He hath given us to understand, that although at that His first coming into the world to save it, He appeared very mean and contemptible in the eyes of men, yet His second coming to judge the world shall be at another rate; that He will then come in the greatest glory and splendour imaginable, having all the Holy Angels, the whole Angelical Order to wait upon Him, ready to execute whatsoever commands He shall be pleased to lay upon them: and accordingly they, at His command, shall blow the trumpet, at the sound whereof all that are dead shall, "in the twinkling of an eye, be raised up again to life," and they who are "then living shall be changed;" and then "He will sit upon the Throne of His Glory," that is, upon His Tribunal or Judgment-Seat; from whence the Glory of His wisdom, power, justice, and mercy, shall shine to all the world.

Matt.25.31.

Matt.24.31. 1Cor.15.52. 1Thes.4.16.

For then "before Him shall be gathered all nations," that is, all mankind that ever lived in any nation upon the face of the earth, from the creation of it to that day, and so Adam himself and his whole posterity, shall then meet together in one place, and there present themselves in a body before Jesus Christ, their Lord and Judge, and "He shall separate them the one from the other, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats." As a shepherd that hath a great flock of sheep and goats mingled together, when he hath a mind to send them to several pastures, the sheep to one, and the goats to another, he divides them asunder, that each sort may go by themselves to the "place that he hath appointed for them:" so, at the Last Day, when all mankind shall appear before Him, Christ, the Great Shepherd of our souls, will separate the righteous from the wicked; those who did, from such as did not believe in Him. For here, by "sheep" He plainly means the "righteous," such as, while they were in this world, had believed in Him and obeyed His Gospel; and therefore

Matt.25.32.

Ibid.

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were justified or accounted righteous before God, by His Merits and Intercession for them, who, as Himself said,
John 10. 15. "laid down His life for the sheep." But soon after He said
ver. 26, 27. to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye believe not, because ye are not of My sheep. My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me." From whence it evidently appears, that He reckons none in the number of His sheep, but such as "hear His voice," believe "in Him," and "follow Him" in the way that He hath set out, and wherein He Himself also walked before them. These He calls His sheep, by reason of their gentleness, and meekness, and patience, and innocency, and usefulness in the world.

[2 Thes. 1. 8.] But the wicked, or unbelievers, such as "knew not God, and obeyed not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ," those He calls "goats;" nasty, stinking, troublesome, and mischievous creatures, which do no good, but all the mischief they can, like the Devils or Fiends of Hell, which are sometimes also called in Hebrew שְׂעִירִים, 'goats.' And all
Lev. 17. 7.
John 8. 44. infidels, all wicked persons, being of their "father the Devil," they are here called by their father's name, and by
John 1. 29. that are distinguished from those that are of Christ, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

Now the King, or Judge of the world, having thus sepa-
Matt. 25. 33. rated the sheep from the goats, "He shall set the sheep on His right hand, and the goats on His left." Both sorts shall stand as near Him as they can, on either hand of Him; but the righteous shall be set on His right hand, as the place of greatest respect and honour; the wicked on the left, as being that of contempt and scorn: but both sorts shall stand by themselves. And then all the world shall see, who were righteous and who were wicked indeed;
Eccl. 9. 2. which cannot be discerned in this life: for "here all things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked; to the good and to the clean, and the unclean; to him that sacrificeth, and to him that sacrificeth not: as is the good, so is the sinner; and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath." But at the Last Day, the distinction shall be made so clear and evident, that we shall behold it with our eyes. If it should please the Judge to set us on His right hand (which God grant He may), if we do but look

about us, we shall there see all the saints and servants of the Most High God, all that lived in His true Faith and Fear in all ages, from the beginning to the end of the world, we shall see them all standing together, on our side, all pleasant and cheerful, all rejoicing and praising Almighty God, and the "Lamb that sitteth upon the Throne," for [Rev.7.17.] His setting them on His right hand. And if we turn our eye to the other side, to the left hand of the Judge, we shall there see the whole multitude of unbelievers and impenitent sinners, of all ages, all standing together, and trembling for fear of the dreadful sentence that must now be pronounced upon them.

But to manifest His Mercy before He executes His Justice, the King will first say to them on the right hand, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom pre- Matt.25.34. pared for you from the foundation of the world." Upon which the righteous having adored and worshipped Him, for His infinite undeserved Mercy to them, and He having given them the reason of it, (of which more presently;) then turning Himself, He will say to them on the left hand, "Depart from Ver. 41. Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels." O terrible sentence of the Most Righteous Judge! A sentence as full of Wrath and Vengeance, as the other is of Grace and Favour! He bids the righteous "come" to Him, but commands the wicked to "go" from Him. To the first he saith, "Come, ye blessed of My Father;" to the other, "Depart from Me, ye cursed." He doth not add, "of My Father," because it is not God, but they who have brought this curse upon themselves. To those on His right hand He saith, "Inherit the kingdom;" to those on His left, "Depart into everlasting fire." He tells the former, that the kingdom which they shall inherit, was prepared for them "from the foundation of the world;" the latter, that the fire to which they must go, was "prepared" not for them, but "for the Devil and his angels:" whereby he signifies to them, that the place of torment to which they are condemned, was at first designed only for the Devil and fallen angels; but seeing they had done "the works of the Devil," and would not be persuaded to "turn to God," and

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serve Him, they must now go to the same place, and there live with the Fiends of Hell for ever.

These are the two sentences which the Judge, from whom lies no appeal, will pass upon all mankind at the last day, the one upon the righteous, the other upon all wicked men. And although, considering the infinite wisdom, knowledge, justice, and clemency of the Judge, there can be no question made of the reasonableness and equity of either sentence; yet howsoever He will be graciously pleased to declare the reason of both of them, and hath told us beforehand of it, that we may all know how to prepare ourselves for that [Joel 2. 11.] "great and terrible day of the Lord."

For, after He hath said to those on His right hand, "Come, ye blessed of My Father," &c., He will, in effect, Ver. 35, 36. give this as the reason of that His gracious sentence: "For I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink; I was a stranger, and ye took Me in; naked, and ye clothed Me; I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." This, at first hearing, will seem something strange to the righteous, most of which having never seen Him in the flesh, will not Ver. 37, 38, 39. presently apprehend His meaning, but will say, "Lord, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed Thee? or thirsty, and gave Thee drink? When saw we Thee a stranger, and took Thee in? or naked, and clothed Thee? or when saw we Thee sick or in prison, and came unto Thee?" Which is not to be so understood, as if there will be then any formal discourse between Christ and His people; but He expresseth Himself after this manner, that we may better apprehend the grounds and reasons upon which He will proceed at this great day. And for the same cause also He saith, that "the King" shall answer to the foresaid ques- Ver. 40. tions of the righteous, and say unto them, "Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." By which answer, He plainly assures us, that whatsoever is done in His name, and for His sake, to any of His faithful people, He will take it as done unto Himself; as really it is, when done out of pure love and obedience unto Him.

But here we must observe two things: first, That our Lord instanceth only in one sort of good works, even such as are done for men in misery and trouble. Not but that He will inquire into all the actions of every man's life: "For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. 12. 14. And He Himself saith, "That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Matt. 12. 36. But He here instanceth in these works of charity, as being the most plain and obvious, only for example sake, that by them we may see what special notice He takes of every thing we do in this life; and that He will account with us for it at the last day, according as it is either good or bad.

The other thing to be here observed is, That although our Lord makes mention only of "good works," yet under them our "faith" also is included; which I therefore observe, because there are some who would infer from this place, that our Saviour, at the last day, will not examine "our faith," but only our manners; not how we believed, but only how we lived. And all their reason is, because here is no mention made of any thing, but only of our works. But this deserves not the name of a reason, upon many accounts.

For, 1. By the same reason, if it may be so called, they may as well conclude that Christ will then inquire into no other of our works, but only such as are there specified; which is contrary to all reason, and likewise to the revelations that we have of the righteous judgments of God.

2. From our Saviour's declaring here that "He will judge us according to our works," it necessarily follows that He will examine "our faith;" that also being one of the "good works" which He requires us to perform: nothing being more frequently commanded, than to believe in Him, and those truths which He hath revealed to us. So that he that doth not believe, lives in sin, or the transgression of the Divine law: neither can such a one keep any of the commandments, nor do any one good work, so as that God will accept of it as good; for "without faith it is impossible to please God," Heb. 11. 6. much less can he do any such

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acts of love or charity as are here mentioned, without "faith," for it is "faith that works by love." And therefore where there is "no faith," there can be no true "love" or "charity;" and wheresoever there is "charity," there must be "faith" too. And by necessary consequence, our Saviour sufficiently declared those on His right hand to have been "true believers," by His owning that they had exercised true charity.

Gal. 5. 6.

3. The same appears also from their being set on His right hand, for "none but His sheep were set there." But His "sheep," as I have shewn already, were such as believed in Him and followed Him: He reckons no other to be of His flock; and it is only because they are so, even in the number of His sheep, that He sets them on His right hand: and therefore He need not afterwards make any express mention of their "faith," that being made evident to all the world by the place where they were set.

Ver. 33.

4. And after all, though He doth not expressly mention their "faith," but their "works," yet He plainly implies and declares their "faith" in the description He gives us of their works. He tells them that they had fed Him, and clothed Him, and had ministered to His necessities: and then explains His meaning, saying, "In that ye have done it to one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." Whereby He assures us, that He will accept of no "good works," or rather of no "works" as good, but such only as are done to Him, and to His brethren as such, which none can do without believing in Him, and owning Him for their Lord and Maker; which therefore is the chief thing that He expects and requires in all our works, that we do them in His name, and for His sake: and hath promised a reward to those only who do them so; "For whosoever," saith He, "shall give you a cup of cold water to drink in My name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward." Wherefore the reason which He here gives why He pronounceth this gracious sentence upon those on His "right hand," is not grounded upon their doing "good works," or such as seemed to be good in general, but upon their doing them as to Him, and so manifesting their faith in Him by their doing

Ver. 40.

Mark 9. 41.

of them, without which He never would have accepted of any thing they had done.

From all which it appears, That as ever we desire to be in the number of those who shall be set at our Lord's "right hand" at the "last day," as we must "take care to maintain good works," so we must be sure also to "believe aright;" without which whatsoever works we do will stand us in no stead at that day: for we shall, notwithstanding, be numbered among the unbelievers, which will not be then set at the right, but at the left hand of Christ; and shall accordingly be condemned by Him to that "everlasting fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels," and is therefore called also the "portion of unbelievers." [Tit. 3. 8.] Luke 12. 46.

But as there can be no "good works" without "faith," so there is no "faith" without "good works." Insomuch that he who doth not "good works," may be confident that he doth not "believe" as the Gospel requires: and so he will find at the "last day," when the Judge of quick and dead, having passed the sentence of condemnation upon those on His left hand, shall give this as the reason of it; for "I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink," &c. As if He had said, "If ye had 'believed' My 'Gospel,' ye would have 'obeyed' My 'laws;' but you have not done the 'good works' which I have set you, and therefore I have allotted you your 'portion with unbelievers.'" Ver. 42, 43.

But here we must also observe, that our Lord instanceth only in sins of omission, to shew, that although men are apt to reckon only upon their sins of commission, whereby they have done what God hath forbidden; yet at the "last day" they must give account also of their sins of "omission," whereby they have left undone what he hath commanded, which is a thing much to be observed: for nothing is more common, than for men who are not guilty of some notorious sin, to flatter themselves with the hopes that all is well with them, although they live in the neglect of all, or most of the duties which they owe to God or their neighbour. But remember, that at the "Last Day" ye must give an account for your "not doing what ye ought," as well as for your "doing what ye ought not:" for your not loving, and

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fearing, and trusting in God with all your hearts: for your not praying to Him, and praising His holy name: for your not receiving the Sacrament of His last supper in "remembrance of Him:" for your not feeding, and clothing, and relieving His poor members: for your not honouring your parents, instructing your children, and taking that care you ought of your families: for your not doing all the works that He hath set you, and for your not improving all the talents that He hath put into your hands, to His use and honour: for your not doing good in the world, but "cumbering the ground" you stand on: for "these things" also "God will bring you into judgment," and will say to you, as He hath here foretold you, "Depart from Me, ye cursed," &c.

[Luke 13. 7.]

[Eccles. 11. 9.]

Having thus considered what our Lord hath been pleased to foretell us, concerning His way and manner of proceeding at the Last Day, we shall better understand the effect and consequence of it, expressed by Him in these words, "And these shall go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous into life eternal." For, as we have seen, He will then divide all mankind into two sorts, the one He calls His "sheep," the other "goats;" the first He will set on His "right hand," the other on His "left;" to those He will say, "Come, ye blessed;" to these, "Depart from Me, ye cursed;" and of these He first saith, "that they shall go into everlasting punishment."

For the full understanding of which words, we must consider,

1. Whom He means by "these."
2. What that punishment is to which they shall go.
3. In what sense He saith it is "everlasting."

1. The first question may be easily resolved by what we have already discoursed; howsoever, for the fuller explication of it, it may not be amiss to observe, that all men are born sinners, and so are "by nature the children of wrath;" neither is there a "just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not." And therefore by these which "shall go into everlasting punishment," we cannot understand "all sinners" in general, for so all men are, and as such deserve to go thither; whereas our Lord here speaks only of one

[Eph. 2. 3.]

Eccles. 7. 20.

sort of men, which He distinguisheth from the other, who "shall go into life eternal." Which therefore must be understood only of such men, as shall be accounted sinners at the Last Day, notwithstanding all that He hath done and suffered for the expiation of their sins, and for their justification before God: such as never repented truly of their sins, nor believed in Christ for the pardon of them: such as did not accept nor improve the grace which was offered in the Gospel, so as to forsake their sins, and turn to God by it: such as are not only sinners, but sinners only, all over sinners, and nothing else, having never done any good through the whole course of their lives: such are all that do not believe in Christ, for "without Him they can do nothing," nothing that is truly good, or that will be accepted of as so before God. They may, perhaps, give an alms now and then to the poor: but as our Lord here saith, they never feed Him, nor clothe Him, nor minister any way to Him, because they do not do it purely for His sake in obedience to His command. If they did so, they would obey all His other commandments as well as that; whereas there are many which they never regard at all, but live continually in the neglect of them: so that their whole lives are but as one continued sin against Him in whom they live.

John 15. 5.

Of this sort there will be many found at the Last Day; yea, it is much to be feared, the far greatest part of mankind in general, and of those also who profess the name of Christ, and do many great things by it: for He Himself saith, "Many will say to Me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Thy Name, and in Thy Name have cast out Devils, and in Thy Name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you, depart from Me ye that work iniquity." All therefore that "work iniquity," all that continue in sin and disobedience to His laws, whether they do or do not profess His religion, these must all depart from Him, and "go into everlasting punishment."

Matt. 7. 22, 23.

2. What "that punishment" is to which they must go, is the next thing I promised to consider; but cannot do it without horror and amazement: I cannot look down into the infernal pit, but my head turns round, and my heart

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trembles for fear of falling into it. And though I can see but very little of it, the little I do see is more than I am able to describe, or so much as speak of, without confusion and astonishment, at the folly and madness of mankind, that generally make so light of it. It is indeed, in all respects, the most sad and melancholy subject that we can ever speak of, or you can hear of. Every word that is said of it, grates, methinks, upon my mind, and so it will upon yours too, if it doth but come so near as to touch them. And certainly if you can ever be touched to the quick, it must be at the hearing of that dismal place, and miserable condition that you must live in for ever, except you repent and turn to God, and serve Him in this present life. Insomuch that if any can hear of it, as many can, without being affected with it, their case must needs be very deplorable, if not desperate. For this shews that a man's heart is hardened, his "conscience seared as with a hot iron," he is grown stupid and insensible of good and evil, and altogether careless of himself, and of his future state, not regarding what becomes of him hereafter, so he may but have his will and humour at present. Such are, doubtless, in "the gall of bitterness," and "the bond of iniquity," in the ready road to ruin, to that everlasting punishment which is so dreadful and terrible, that I should not dare to offer at any description of it, but for the sake of such as care not, if they do go to it. But they will be no sooner there, but they will be quite of another mind: then they will wish with all their souls, that they had made it only the care of this life to provide for the next: then they will feel, by woful experience, "what a fearful thing it is to fall into the hands of the living God," for then they will be stripped of every thing that can do them any good, and suffer all the pains and torments which they can be able to bear, without sinking into nothing under them. To which two heads, all that is necessary to be known concerning this "everlasting punishment" may be reduced; and we shall accordingly consider it, as it is both *Pœna damni, et pœna sensus*, 'the punishment of loss, and the punishment of sense.'

[1 Tim. 4. 2.]

[Acts 8. 23.]

Heb. 10.31.

First; this punishment consisteth in the loss of all they ever had, or were ever capable of: all men, as such, are

capable of all the comforts that all the creatures in the world can afford them: capable of seeing and enjoying the Creator Himself, the chiefest good; capable of that supreme glory and happiness which He confers upon the Holy Angels in Heaven: and many shall accordingly be made equal to Him in all respects, and "shine" every one "as the sun, in the Kingdom of their Father;" as full of light, and love, and goodness, of all manner of true joy and pleasure, as they are able to hold; as full as God Himself can make them. But they who go into everlasting punishment shall have nothing of all this, although they see, to their unspeakable grief and trouble, that many others have it, and some, perhaps, of those whom they had despised upon earth, as much as the rich man in the Gospel did Lazarus; "he saw Lazarus in Abraham's bosom," but he could not come at him, nor partake of the pleasures which he there enjoyed. So he that is in Hell, may see the righteous advanced to the highest degrees of honour, whilst he lives in absolute contempt and shame: he may see "the light of God's countenance" shining most gloriously upon them, whilst he is "in utter darkness." He may see them living with Angels and Arch-angels, and with all the glorious company of Heaven, whilst he hath none but a company of Devils and damned souls about him. He may see them swimming in those "rivers of pleasures which are at God's right hand," while he hath not so much "as one drop of water to cool his tongue." He may see them have all things they can desire, and himself not any one thing he would have. How will this torment and vex his soul? He was wont to envy the rise and prosperity of others in this world: but how will the worm of envy gnaw and fret him to the heart, when he shall see so many "admitted into the Kingdom of Heaven," and he himself "shut out?" Especially when he remembers that it was his own fault, that he is not there as well as they. He would not take the care and pains about it as they did, and therefore hath now lost all that they enjoy.

[Matt. 13. 43.] Luke 16. 23. [Rev. 22. 1.] [Luke 16. 24.]

But although they will then be of another mind, at present such people may think, perhaps, that this is no great matter: they do not much care if they never go to Heaven, so they may but enjoy the good things of the

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earth. But alas! they will have no more of them than of the other: as the rich man before spoken of, who "was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day;" when he was got to Hell, he had not "one drop of water," not so much as would stick to the "tip of a man's finger," when dipped into it. And he whose ground brought forth plentifully, so that he thought of nothing but pulling down his barns, and building greater, that he might have where to bestow his goods; he little thought of ever parting with them. But what said the answer of God to him? "Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose shall those things be which thou hast provided?" Whose shall they be? None of his, be sure. Other people, perhaps, may enjoy them for awhile, as he did; but he, for his part, will have no share at all in them, not so much as one foot of land, one crumb of bread, one drop of water, one rag of clothes, nor so much as one farthing of money, wherewith to buy it if he could. All that he laboured for all his life long, it is now all gone, past all possibility of being ever retrieved. He had once, perhaps, a fine house to live in, with a great deal of rich furniture, but now he hath not "where to lay his head," but in the midst of flames and fire. He had once farms, or manors, and perhaps several whole kingdoms, in his possession; but now the poorest beggar upon earth hath more than he. He once had a great many friends, but now he hath not one in all the world. He used to have gold and silver, and a great many fine things, as he thought, but now he lives in the very extremity of penury, in the want of every thing that can do him any good, or that he could imagine would do so.

Luke 16.19, 24.

Luke 12.20.

[Matt. 8. 20.]

All this is plainly signified by the first words of the sentence, which the Judge shall pronounce against those on His left hand, "Depart from Me;" for in that they must depart from Him, the only good, they must needs depart from all manner of good, so as never to know what it is any more.

And in that He adds, "ye cursed, into everlasting fire;" they will be thereby condemned also to all manner of evil, which they can any way perceive or feel. This is called "the punishment of sense," because all their senses, both inward and outward, both soul and body, shall be affected

with it: as our Lord Himself also intimates, where He requires us to "fear Him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell." They shall both be there destroyed, both soul and body, not dissolved or reduced to nothing, but afflicted with all the pain and anguish that either can be sensible of, and able to endure. As the "rich man's" body was so tormented in that flame, that "He begged," but in vain, for "a little water" to cool His scorched tongue; so it will be with all that shall be there, after the resurrection of the body. Their senses will be all offended and tormented continually with something or other they meet with there: "their ears," with the howling, and "weeping, and gnashing the teeth" of all that are about them. "Their eyes," with the frightful spectacles of fiends and furies flying about and haunting them perpetually: their "noses" and "mouths" with the suffocating smell, and the most abominable taste of infernal "fire and brimstone." And all the "nervous parts" of their bodies with the feeling of the most acute pains and aches that can be inflicted on them.

Matt.10.28.

Matt.25.30.

Rev. 21. 8.

But who can express what they will then feel in their souls, when they "shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power?" When their souls shall be shattered and broken as it were in pieces, and all their faculties disordered and out of tune? When they shall remember nothing but their sins and follies, nor understand any thing but the height of God's justice and vengeance upon them? When they shall have nothing that they would, but every thing that they would not? When their affections of love, desire, hope and joy, shall cease to act, but their contrary passions of hatred and abhorrence, fear and grief, shall be in continual exercise upon their respective objects? When they shall be made to "possess all their iniquities," and their consciences shall be always flying in their faces for them? When they shall think of nothing but what they did upon earth, and what they now suffer for it in Hell? When every one shall be his own executioner, to execute God's vengeance upon himself, as well as upon all that are about him? When the Almighty Creator of the World shall manifest His fiery wrath and indignation against them, and make

2 Thes. 1. 9.

[Job13.26.]

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them know, by woful experience, what it is to break His Law, dishonour His Name, and refuse the grace that He was pleased to offer to them! How will this rack and torment their souls! Oh the gall and the wormwood, the [Rev.16.1.] "bitterness of the cup which they must drink! the viols of God's wrath" poured down in full measure upon them, into them, all over them! What a sad confusion are these miserable wretches in! All hating one another, and every one himself, mortally. Always restless and uneasy, hurried about by the furies in their own breasts, as well as by those that are about their ears: always tossing to and fro in that "everlasting fire" that is "prepared for the Devil and his angels." This, with the rest of the damned crew, is all the company they keep: this is all the work which they do, or rather which they must always suffer, that go into "everlasting punishment."

3. I say, always; for the Judge Himself here calls it "everlasting punishment:" and so He doth in the very sentence also, whereby He condemns them to it, saying, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire:" whereas, He saith Mark 9. 44. again, in another place, "The worm dieth not, and the fire 2 Thes. 1. 9. is not quenched." Hence the Apostle calls it "everlasting Dan. 12. 2. destruction." And the Prophet Daniel saith, that "some shall awake to everlasting life, and some to everlasting contempt," where, in the original, the same word is used for "everlasting," with respect both to life and contempt; as it is in my text also, both for "everlasting punishment," and for "life eternal." And therefore as it is certain, that the righteous shall live for ever, it is as certain, that the wicked shall be "punished for ever." So that when they have been tormented in that flame millions of millions of ages, they will be still but where they were, as far from an end as they were at first: and that which, if it be possible, will increase their misery, is, that they can never see any end of it, but shall always be fully assured, that as if they had lived for ever, they would have sinned for ever, so they must now suffer for ever; and that, as God, against whom their sins were committed, is "everlasting," so "their punishment" for them will be "everlasting" too. This is a sad subject, I confess it; but it is better to hear of it, than to feel it, as all

must do that continue in sin and unbelief. Hence it is that I have endeavoured to give you what light I could into these regions of darkness, that you may all see how much it concerns you to live "soberly, righteously and godly in this present world," as you desire not to live in the extremity of want, and shame, and pain for ever. Wherefore, if you care not what becomes of you hereafter, so you may but enjoy "the pleasures of sin for a season," you may still go on to transgress the laws, mistrust the promises, profane the Name, and neglect the service of your Almighty Creator; but "know that for all these things God will bring you into judgment," at the "great and terrible day of the Lord," and will then condemn you to that "everlasting punishment" which you have now been hearing of, and which you will find to be far greater than you have now heard, or can yet imagine it to be. But blessed be God, you are yet in a capacity of avoiding it if you will; for you are still in the land of the living, and have all the means that can be desired, whereby to prevent your "falling into condemnation." Be advised therefore to make use of them while you may that you may turn out of the broad way that leads to destruction, and walk for the future in that narrow path that will bring you to "life everlasting;" that when you come to stand before Christ's tribunal, you may not be set at His "left hand," and from thence go into "everlasting punishment," but may be found in the number of the "righteous," who shall stand on His "right hand," and go from thence into "life eternal."

[Tit. 2. 12.]

[Heb. 11. 25.]

[Eccles. 11. 9.]

And so we come to the next great truth, which our Lord hath here taught us, that we may understand from His own mouth what a vast difference He will make at that day, between the wicked and the righteous, assuring us, that "these shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." Which is a thing much to be observed, for in this world it is very difficult to distinguish the one from the other, and impossible to do it by the outward circumstances of their lives; for "no man knoweth either love or hatred by all that is before them: all things come alike to all, there is one event to the righteous and to the wicked." Yea, oftentimes the best men have the worst, and the worst men the

Eccles. 9. 1, 2.

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best things, as they are called, of this world. But at the "last day" the scene shall be quite changed: for then all that were ill men shall have all the ill things that can be imagined, and nothing at all that is good, as we have already seen; whereas all who were good men, shall have all the good things they can desire, and nothing at all that is ill: as our Lord here assures us, by saying, the "righteous shall go into life eternal." Where, by the "righteous," as I have already observed in general from the context, we are to understand such as "believe" in Jesus Christ, and are therefore enabled by Him to walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless; as Zacharias and Elizabeth did, and for that reason are both said to be "righteous before God." For it is not any one or more particular good and righteous acts which a man doth, that can denominate him to be a "righteous man:" but he that would be reckoned in the number of the "righteous," must keep the whole Law of God, and do "all such good works as God hath prepared for him to walk in," to the best of his knowledge and power. He must love, and fear, and trust in God with all his soul: he must serve and honour Him with his whole substance: he must be meek, and humble, and patient, and sober, and "temperate in all things:" he must be just in all his dealings, "doing to all" other "men as he would have them do to him:" he must "feed the hungry, clothe the naked," and relieve such as are distressed in mind, body, or estate, as far as he is able. For which purposes he must "watch," and "fast," and "pray," and praise God, hear His most Holy Word, and often receive the Sacrament that our Lord hath ordained in remembrance of Him: "And whatsoever he doth in word or deed," he must do it "in the Name of the Lord Jesus," believing and depending upon Him, both for His assistance in doing it, and for God's acceptance of it when it is done.

Luke 1. 6.

[Eph. 2. 10.]

[1 Cor. 9. 25.]

Col. 3. 17.

For, after all, it is only by this our "faith" in Christ, that either what we do, or we that do it, can be accepted of as righteous before God; for whatsoever we do in this imperfect state, though we do it by the grace and assistance of Christ Himself, yet, as done by us, it is very imperfect, and far short of the "righteousness" which the law requires.

And therefore whatsoever righteous acts we may seem to do, they being not "perfectly righteous," we can never be accounted "righteous" for them by the infinitely wise and righteous God, who judges all things, not as they seem to be, but as they really are: but we really are "not righteous" in ourselves, and, by consequence, cannot be "accounted righteous" by Him, for any thing in ourselves. But our comfort is, that His only-begotten Son, having, in our nature and stead, been "perfectly righteous," and "obedient to death, even the death of the cross;" they, who by a quick and lively faith are united to Him, and so made real members of His body, are thereby interested in His righteousness as their own; and by that, through His merits and intercession for them, are justified, or "accounted righteous" before God; as they well may, seeing that "the righteousness which they have in Him," is the most perfect that any creature in the world can have: and though it be not in themselves, but in Him, it is theirs in Him, as much as if it was in themselves. This we learn, as from the whole design of of the Gospel, so particularly from St. Paul, who, though he "was blameless," as to all outward appearance, "touching the righteousness which is in the Law," yet he desired above all things to be "found in Christ, not having his own righteousness, whic his of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Where we see, he speaks of a "twofold righteousness," one he calls "our own," which is "of the Law," which being "imperfect," cannot justify us; and therefore he desires not to have that, or rather, not only that: the other is, that which we have "through the faith of Christ, the righteousness" which is not of man, but of God, even of God our Saviour, by faith in Him. This is that righteousness which they who believe, and so are found in Him, have in Jesus Christ; and by which, as being absolutely perfect, they are therefore made and "accounted righteous before God," according to that of the same Apostle in another place, "As by one man's disobedience, many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one," even of Christ, "shall many be made righteous."

[Phil. 2. 8.] [Phil. 3. 6. 9.] [Rom. 5. 19.]

And they who are thus made sincerely righteous in them-

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selves, and are accounted righteous in Christ, by their faith in Him as all true believers will be found to be at the last day; these are those righteous persons which shall then go into "life eternal." That they go into "eternal life" we cannot doubt, having here the Word of Christ Himself for it: the only question is, what that "eternal life" is, to which they shall go, and wherein it properly consists? Which is one of the most profitable, as well as most pleasant subjects that we can ever exercise our thoughts upon; forasmuch, as nothing can more encourage and excite us all, to strive all we can to be in the number of the righteous, than rightly to understand and consider the greatness of that glory and happiness, which all such persons shall be advanced to, and enjoy for ever.

For here, by "life eternal," we are certainly to understand that happy state or kind of life, which the glorified Saints and Angels lead in Heaven; which so far exceeds all that which we call happiness upon earth, that whilst we are here, we are not able to conceive the greatness of it; as both the Prophet and Apostle long ago observed, saying, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." And therefore expect not, that I should fully describe them to you; that is past my skill. Mine, did I say? The great Apostle, St. Paul himself, could not do it, when he was caught up into the third Heavens, into Paradise itself, "whether in the body or out of the body," he could not tell; but this he could tell, that he there "heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful," or rather not possible, "for a man to utter." How then can we do it, who as yet were never there? Alas! we mortals upon earth, being here in our imperfect and corrupt state, and conversing ordinarily with none but sensible and material objects; we cannot imagine what it is to live with the Holy Angels in Heaven, nor what those pleasures are which they enjoy. We know not what is done in any place upon earth, except that where we ourselves are; much less do we know what they do in Heaven, and least of all, how they are transported in doing it: how then is it possible for us to express it?

1 Cor. 2. 9; Isa. 64. 4.

2 Cor. 12. 4.

It is true, they whose hearts are purified by faith in

Christ, and right set to obey the Commandments of God, may sometimes have a transient glance of the glories of the other world; some little foretastes or intimations of those celestial joys, whereby they may guess at the nature and excellency of them: but they are such as none can know, but they who feel them; neither are they able to declare or describe them unto others, as St. Peter observes, where speaking of Christ to those who believe in Him, he saith, "Whom having not seen, ye love: in whom, though now you see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." By their faith in Christ, they have extraordinary and most glorious joy, and much of the same nature with that which they have in Heaven, though in a lower degree; but this also is unspeakable: though they experience it in themselves, they cannot express it, so as that others also may perceive it; for none can be sensible of any thing which another feels, but he that feels it, though he tells it to them; much less, of such transcendent joys, as are beyond all expressions whatsoever. 1 Pet. 1. 8.

Which I therefore observe, that you may not expect that all should be affected with what I say concerning "eternal life;" for that none can be, but only such as "have their senses exercised," and have already tasted something of it: they may improve the hints that I shall give them of it, so as to be enflamed with more ardent desires and longings after the full participation of it; but no other will understand any thing that is said of it, unless God be pleased, at the same time that the word is spoken, to "open their hearts" to receive it with faith and love.

These things being thus premised, we shall now consider, what that "life eternal" is, to which the "righteous," as our Lord here speaks, "shall go." I say, consider, not describe it; for that, as I have observed, is impossible to be done. But howsoever, we may and ought to consider what God our Saviour, who only knows it, hath been pleased to tell us of it in His Holy Word, which was written on purpose that we may "know the way that leads to life," and so much also of that life to which it leads, as may make us strive to enter into it. [Matt. 7. 14.]

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Now, if we consult God's Holy Word, we shall find that course of life which the righteous live in Heaven, here called "life eternal," is there revealed to us, and set forth under such names and characters, which plainly discover it to be the easiest, the best, the highest, the happiest way of living, that it is possible for creatures to be made capable of. But that we may be able to frame a more distinct idea of it in our minds, we may consider,

First, That the whole man, both soul and body, is there restored and advanced to its highest perfection. While we are upon earth, we find by our own experience, as well as Divine Revelation, that our whole frame is disordered and out of tune; and that too, not only in some, but in all mankind, in those also that are regenerate or born again of God: insomuch, that the best men, in the best estate they can here be in, have so many weaknesses and imperfections, as make their lives very uneasy and troublesome to them: whatsoever their outward condition be, although they have, which is very rare, all the comforts and conveniences which this world can afford them, yet they have still something within that disturbs them; if it be nothing else, but that they cannot fully answer the end of their creation, by honouring and serving their Almighty Creator, so well as they are bound and desire to do. Neither is it possible for them to be perfectly free from trouble, much less to be perfectly happy, until they themselves are perfect; for every imperfection in their nature, makes all their enjoyments, as well as actions, imperfect. Though they were at God's right hand, they could not perfectly enjoy the pleasures which are there; being, so far as they are imperfect, incapacitated, or not rightly disposed for the enjoyment of them.

The first thing therefore to be observed in that "eternal life" to which the righteous go, is, that they are no sooner there, but they are immediately in a state of "absolute perfection;" "for their souls," as the Apostle saith, "are the spirits of just men made perfect." As perfect as the Holy Angels themselves, for they are made "equal to them," all their powers and faculties being reduced to the same frame and temper in which they were at first made, so as to

Heb. 12. 23.

Luke 20. 36.

perform their respective offices in the most exact and perfect manner that can be, just as they were at first designed to perform them.

Their reason or understanding is always serene and clear, and so capacious and comprehensive, as to take in all things they have a mind to know, though not altogether by one simple intuition, as God doth, and none but He can, yet one thing after another; so that whatsoever they fix their thoughts upon, they immediately see into the nature, the cause, and the effects of it, or whatsoever they would know concerning it, without any labour or study. All the wonderful phænomena of nature, which so much puzzle and perplex the curious searchers into them upon Earth, they all lie plain and open to those "blessed souls;" so doth every part of the creation, whatsoever God hath made or done, whensoever they cast their eyes upon it: by which means they can reason and discourse together of all the marvellous works of God, without any hesitation or contention; pass a right judgment upon all things; and wisely make choice of the best end they can ever aim at in what they do, and the best means that can be used for the attainment of it.

Their memory also will be so faithful and tenacious, as to retain whatsoever they ever heard or knew, that can any way contribute to their pleasure and delight; even those things also which they had done, or had been done to them, or for them, while they were upon Earth, though perhaps they took little notice of them then, or afterwards forgot them, yet in Heaven they will all recur, and be as fresh again in their minds and memories, as if they had been but just then done; as our Lord promised His Apostles, that the "Comforter should bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever He had said to them." So the spirits of "just men made perfect," will have all things brought to their remembrance, so far as the remembrance of them can add any thing to their comfort; as whatsoever happened to them through the whole course of their lives will do some way or other: they shall then call to mind all the wonderful works which God did for them upon Earth, and see how they all wrought together "for their good." They may see some- [John 14. 26.] [Rom. 8. 28.]

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thing of it here, but there they shall see it perfectly, so as to praise and magnify the Divine Goodness in every thing that ever befell them.

The will likewise, or elective faculty, will be there perfectly obedient to their judgment and understanding, and so conformable and agreeable to the Divine Will in all things, never deviating in the least from it, but running always exactly parallel with it, willing only what God wills, and therefore only because He wills it; and so moving continually just as He would have it. But there will be no objects for those motions of the will which we call irascible passions to work upon, such as anger, hatred, grief, and fear; in all which there is something of torment, which will therefore cease in course, so as never to stir in them: they can never be angry, for they will have nothing to be angry at; neither can they hate any thing, in that they can see nothing that is ill or hateful, nothing that can move that passion. Grieve they cannot, for there is nothing that can trouble or molest them. And as for fear, that will be quite cast out, by a full assurance, that no mischief can ever befall them. Neither will all those which we call concupiscible affections continue to act in that blessed state: particularly, not desire nor hope; for what can they desire, who have all things they can desire? And how can they hope for any thing, who see and possess all things? For, as the Apostle argues, "Hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for it?" So that of all the passions which here move in us, none will continue there but love and joy. But they will be in perpetual motion, and that too in the quickest and highest manner that it is possible for them to move; for those blessed spirits live in "perfect love" and amity together, every one loving every one as himself; and they all love God with all their souls, and all things that He hath made, for His sake that made them. And as they are always loving, they are always rejoicing in Him, and in His love and favour to them; and so are always "singing and making melody to Him in their hearts."

Rom. 8. 24.

[Eph. 5. 19.]

But do not their consciences sometimes interrupt their joy, by putting them in mind of their sins and offences which they formerly committed against God? They would, perhaps,

if they could; but the conscience is now deprived of that part of its office: it cannot accuse them of any sin, for there is none they can be accused of; their sins being all most perfectly "washed away by the blood of Christ:" so that [Rev. 1. 5.] their consciences have nothing else to do, but to approve their obedience to the Will of God, and to assure them that all is well with them; which is so far from being an interruption, that it is a great increase and confirmation of their joy: for, by this means, these blessed souls live in perfect peace, both with God, and with themselves; and in full assurance of the continuance of His love to them, and theirs to Him; and, by consequence of this their perfect and supreme felicity, not only in their separate state, from the time they leave their bodies, but likewise when their bodies shall be raised from the dust, and united again to them as they were before.

For their bodies also shall then be raised to the highest degree of perfection that they are capable of: they shall then be freed from all such gross humours as make them dull and heavy, or else rampant and ungovernable: they shall tyrannise no longer over the soul, nor so much as hinder it in its operations or enjoyments, but shall always continue in perfect submission and obedience to it. Though it shall be the same body it was before, as to its substance and matter, yet it shall be so purged, refined, and sublimated, that it shall become, in a manner, spiritual; at least, in comparison of what it was before. This we learn from the Apostle, saying, that "the body is sown in corruption, it is raised in [1 Cor. 15. 42-44.] incorruption; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body; there is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body." It shall still be a real body, but not a mere natural body, such as it was upon Earth, but of a more pure and spiritual disposition, as like to a spirit as it is possible for matter to be made; so that it shall have all the properties or qualities of a spirit, except such whereby it is essentially distinguished from matter; it shall subsist without meat, or drink, or sleep, as a spirit doth: it shall move and act in as large a sphere, and be as much at the beck and command of the soul, as if itself also was of the same nature.

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And if any question be made, how this can be? the Apostle resolves it, where he saith, that our Lord Jesus Christ "shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." The Body of our Lord is, doubtless, the most glorious body in the world, far more glorious than the sun: and therefore when He appeared to St. Paul, St. Paul saith, that he "saw a light from Heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about him." And if we could see the Body of Christ shining in the Heavens, as we do that of the sun in a clear day, we should scarce see the sun at all; no more than we do the moon when the sun shineth. But, howsoever, the sun being the most glorious body that we see, the Body of Christ is compared to that. As to His Transfiguration, it is said, that His "face did shine as the sun;" and His very "raiment was white as the light." And as His Body was thus transfigured upon Earth, so shall the body of every saint be transfigured by Him, so as to be "fashioned like to His glorious Body;" inasmuch that they also "shall shine as the sun in the Kingdom of their Father;" and "as the stars for ever and ever." But this shall be brought about, as the Apostle saith, "by His working, by His Almighty Power," that "whereby He is able to subdue all things to Himself:" and if he undertakes it, and will exert His Omnipotence in the working of it, as be sure He will, we cannot doubt, but the bodies also of the righteous will then be made, in all respects, as "glorious and perfect" as it is possible to be made.

Phil. 3. 21. Acts 26. 13. Matt. 17. 2. Matt. 13. 43. Dan. 12. 3.

Being thus made "perfect" both in soul and body, they live continually in a state of perfect security from all manner of trouble and molestation. If it was possible for them to meet with any such thing there, as usually disturbs corrupt mortals upon Earth, they could not be affected with it, in that there is nothing within them capable of perturbation. But there is no fear of that, there is nothing either within them, or without them, that can ever be any trouble to them: their souls being made perfect, they can never act or think contrary to the Will of God, nor otherwise than just as He would have them: they never mistake in their opinion, nor fail in their judgment, nor think so much as a

vain thought: they are never surprised with any accident, nor fall into any inadvertency, nor have cause to say, "I did not think it:" they never "choose the evil before the good," nor the worse before the better, nor have the least inclination to it: their passions are never out of order, never turbulent or irregular, but always fixed upon their proper objects, in such a manner as is proper for them. So that they live "without" all manner of "offence, both towards God, and towards one another," and every one towards himself too; their consciences having nothing to say against them, for any thing they ever think, or speak, or do: they are apprehensive of no danger, nor have any cares or fears upon them, for their "hearts are always fixed, trusting in [Ps. 112. 7.] the Lord."

Neither are their bodies ever out of tune: they are never hungry, nor thirsty, nor weary, nor sleepy, nor so much as dull or heavy: their heads are never clouded, their hearts never ache, their senses never decay, neither is the whole or any part ever subject to sickness, or pain, or any the least indisposition whatsoever: they never lament nor weep for any thing; for "God shall wipe away all tears from their [Rev. 21. 4.] eyes: and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away." While they were upon Earth, they were always in one sort of trouble or other, in mind, body, or estate; but now they are in none at all, nor ever fear any, but live in continual rest and tranquillity, in perfect health, and strength, and vigour, both of mind and body, and in an utter impossibility of ever being any way molested or discomposed any more. And if there was nothing else in that blessed state, but this perfect freedom and security from all evil; this, one would think, should be sufficient to make us all, not only labour after it with all our might, but also long to be in it with all our hearts.

But though this be much more than we, who know little else but trouble, can well imagine, yet it is the least that can be said of it: for here they have "the best company" in the world, such as they like most, as being most agreeable to their pure and spotless nature; for though there be vast multitudes of them, more than we or they, perhaps, them-

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selves can tell, yet being all of equal perfection, they all live together, "have all things common," are all of a piece, "all of one mind," as if they had but "one soul" among them. Neither are they fellow-commoners only with one another, but likewise with all the "holy angels;" they are now made "equal to them" in knowledge, in wisdom, in purity, in glory, in the love and favour of God, in all manner of perfection; and therefore are now of the same society with them, and always enjoy their sweet and pleasant company; yea, and His too who is above them all, the best Friend they ever had or have in the whole world, "the blessed Jesus," who brought them thither on purpose, that they might "behold the glory which the Father hath given Him." For this end it was, that He went before to prepare a place for them, "that where He is, there they may be also." There they live with Him, therefore, in a constant sense of His love, and under the beams of His glory darted continually upon them; whereby their blessed souls are warmed, refreshed, transported, so as to be always in a flame of love and thankfulness to Him for His unspeakable, His inestimable, His infinite love and kindness to them, in bringing and admitting them to live with Him.

[Luke 20. 36.]

John 17. 24.

John 14. 3.

And what can they lack who live with Him, and have His favour, whose all things are? "All things are put under His feet: He is given to be Head over all things to the Church," particularly to that part of it which is in "Heaven." And therefore, all that are there, having Him who hath all things always with them, cannot but in Him have all things too. They are sure of it, and so may we be too as well as they; for we have His word for it, saying, "He that overcometh shall inherit all things." He speaks not in the plural, but singular number; not of all in general, but of every one particularly. "Every one that overcometh the world," the flesh, and the Devil, so as, by the grace and merits of Christ, to get to Heaven, shall there inherit and possess all things, as much as if there was none to possess any thing but himself. So that every one hath every thing that is in his own possession, so as to enjoy whatsoever pleasure or delight it can afford him. Here are true riches, large possessions indeed; such as are not stinted

Eph. 1. 22.

Rev. 21. 7.

to a little money, to a piece of ground, or to a kingdom, or territory upon earth, but extend themselves over the whole creation, without buttings or boundings on any side: when a man can look upon all things that are, and say, "All these things are mine."

This is that which our Lord means, when He saith to those on His right hand, "Inherit the kingdom prepared for you." And "it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "The kingdom," by way of pre-eminence, so far exceeding all other, that none else deserves that name in comparison of this, which hath all other kingdoms in subjection, together with all things that are in them, or besides them, in any part of the whole world. Well may this be called a crown, "the crown of life," "a crown of righteousness," "the crown of glory." And well may they that have it be called "kings," seeing they have every one such a "kingdom," that they rule and reign over all things that God hath made in Heaven or Earth.

Matt. 25. 34. Luke 12. 32. Rev. 2. 10. 2 Tim. 4. 8. 1 Pet. 5. 4. Rev. 1. 6.

Neither is this an empty title of honour, without profit or advantage: for all and every one of these "glorious princes" reign in their unlimited dominion, so as to receive tribute from all and every thing that is in it; all things concurring, and every thing contributing something to complete their happiness. Their very "bodily senses" that remain after the resurrection, being exalted to the highest degree of quickness, shall be extremely delighted with the outward circumstances of things; "their eyes" with the infinite variety of colours, "their smell" with the most exquisite odours that every thing shall send forth; and "their ears" with the melodious harmony of all things moving and working together, for the advancement of God's glory and their happiness. But these bodily pleasures shall not terminate in their senses, but pass through them into their souls, and raise in them such an admiration of the infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness of Him that "created all things," that they shall be always rejoicing and praising His Divine perfections appearing in them, in every one of them, one as well as another: they shall there see His Divine glory shining forth in the least, as much as in the greatest, in the most common, as well as in the rarest things that ever

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happened: they shall there see how the earth hangs upon nothing, in the open firmament, as the stars and planets do, how it is upheld, and whether it stands still or moves: they shall there see into the nature of all animals, plants, and metals, and whatsoever else is in or upon the earth, how they are propagated and preserved, what virtues God hath put into them, and for what ends and purposes; what makes the sea to ebb and flow, and why it doth so. They shall walk when they please, from one star to another, and there see the wonderful works of God in them; and every thing they see shall afford them fresh matter of praise and delight in Him that made it. Insomuch, that although there be innumerable creatures in the world, far more than any finite understanding, in its highest perfection, can ever reach and reckon up, yet there is nothing they could be without, nothing but they will be some way or other better for it: for they themselves being absolutely "perfect," they will see every thing in the same beauty and perfection wherein it was made: which must needs ravish and transport them into the highest ecstasies of joy and thankfulness to Him that made it. But what then will all things together do? How happy must they needs be, who have the whole creation to make them so! They can pick and choose where they will, and never miss to find out fresh matter, for which to praise and magnify the Almighty Creator of the world, and so to answer His holy end in His creation of them: which they always doing, they are always pleased with what they do, being fully satisfied in their own minds, that they do the work they were made for, and so please Him that made them; by which means, they are as happy as all things that God hath made can make them.

This, one would think, is happiness enough for any creature to enjoy: be sure, it is infinitely more than any man can deserve; yet after all, it is nothing in comparison of what the saints enjoy in Heaven: for there they enjoy, not only all things that God hath made, but Him too that made them. For being perfectly "pure in heart, they see God." "They see Him as He is." "They know Him even as they are known of Him." And herein it is that eternal life most properly consisteth; as our Lord Himself hath taught us,

Matt. 5. 8.

1 John 3. 2.

1 Cor. 13. 12.

saying to His Father, "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent." John 17. 3. And lest this should seem strange, how finite creatures should know and see the Infinite and Eternal God, St. John, in the visions he had of that blessed state, having told us, that "there they shall see the face of God;" he adds, "And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God giveth them light." Rev. 22. 4, 5. And a little before he saith, "The glory of God lightens that holy city, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Chap. 21. 23. So that they see God, as we see the sun, by His own light, shining continually upon them, into them, all over them; enlightening, influencing, quickening, and inflaming their whole souls, so as to fill them with the clearest sense, the strongest assurance, and the highest apprehensions of His Divine glory and goodness, that the most perfect creatures can be made capable of.

But here I must confess myself at a loss, not knowing what to say; for who is able to express what they feel, who have "the light of God's countenance" shining continually upon them? By His light "they see light," and glory and goodness itself. [Ps. 36. 9.] By it they see the First Cause, the supreme Governor of the world, upholding and ordering all things so, as to make every thing set forth His honour and glory: by it they see "the Lamb of God, the Son of the Father," the Eternal God their Saviour, in their own nature, disposing of all things for their eternal good and happiness: by it they see the Holy Spirit of God, "moving upon the" face of the "world," and particularly upon their own souls, to keep them always fixed upon the chiefest good: by it they see Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, the one, living, true, Almighty God, perfectly reconciled to them, and well pleased with them: by it they see His infinite mercy, in the redemption He hath wrought for them by His Son, and in carrying them, by Him, through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, till He had made them "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in this glorious light:" [Col. 1. 12.] by it they see Him smiling continually upon them, and in manifesting His special love and favour to them, whereby their blessed souls are filled with all the

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joy and pleasure they can hold. Insomuch, that they are never able to contain themselves, but are always breaking forth into praises and hallelujahs: always rejoicing, adoring, and glorifying their Almighty Creator, their most merciful Redeemer, their most gracious Sanctifier and Comforter: always singing with Angels and Archangels, "Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, Heaven and Earth is full of Thy glory." "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb." "Amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever." "Amen, Hallelujah."

Isa. 6. 3. Rev. 4. 8. Chap. 7. 10. Ver. 12. Chap. 19. 4.

This is the glorious state of the Saints in Heaven, the work they always do, the happy life they lead continually; and that too, not only for some time, but to all eternity. We may be confident of it, as they always are; for the Supreme Judge of the world here saith, "That the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

These, you see, are not mine, but the words of Christ Himself: I have only endeavoured to explain them so, as that you may understand something of the greatness of that punishment which the wicked undergo, and the happiness of that life which the righteous lead in the other world. Whereby I have set before you, as clearly as I could, both death and life, eternal death and eternal life; now choose ye which ye will have: blessed be God, as yet ye can have your option. Whilst you live in this world, you are in a capacity of escaping that "everlasting punishment," and of obtaining that "eternal life" you have now heard of; and it is at your own choice as yet, whether ye will do it or no: but so soon as ever this life is ended, your eternal state will be determined and fixed, so as never to be altered; and therefore it highly concerns you to remember what ye have now heard, as long as you live.

Whilst you were hearing of that intolerable pain and torment, which wicked and ungodly men endure in Hell fire, did not your ears tingle? Did not your hearts tremble for fear, lest you should be in the number of them, and so be lost and undone for ever? And whilst you were

hearing of the joys of Heaven, and that supreme felicity which the righteous there enjoy, did not your hearts burn within you? Were they not all in a flame with holy desires and resolutions of becoming such righteous persons, that when ye leave this, ye may go into "life eternal?" Now be advised to keep these things always fresh in your memories, that ye may always be of the same mind you were in at the hearing of them; and accordingly, "redeem the time ye have lost," and make it now the chief care and study of this life, to prepare for the next. Neglect none of the means which God hath ordained, whereby to receive grace and Salvation from Him; but use them all heartily, sincerely, constantly, that ye may "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;" that ye may live with a firm belief and trust on Him for all things necessary to your Salvation; that "His grace may be alway sufficient for you," and His power rest continually upon you; that ye may "do all things through Christ that strengtheneth you;" that ye may "mortify all your sins," so as to walk for the future in "newness of life;" that ye may "deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, still pressing towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ our Lord:" that when ye go out of this miserable and naughty world, ye may not go with "the wicked into everlasting punishment," but with "the righteous into life eternal," through the same Lord Jesus, "to whom," &c.

[Eph. 5. 16.]
[2 Pet. 3. 18.]
[2 Cor. 12. 9.]
[Phil. 4. 13.]
[Rom. 6. 4.]
[Tit. 2. 12.]
[Phil. 3. 14.]

SERMON XXI.

THE GLORIES OF CHRIST'S CROSS.

GAL. vi. 14.

But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.

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WITHOUT controversy, "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh," and crucified in it too. What is, if this be not, an unconceivable mystery? That "He, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;" that He should "make Himself of no reputation;" that He should "take upon Him the form of a servant;" that He should "be made in the likeness of men;" that He "being found in fashion as a man, should humble Himself;" that He should become obedient, "obedient unto death, even the death upon the cross!" This so far exceeds man's understanding, that none could ever have thought it possible, nor so much as have ever thought at all of it, if it had not been revealed. And when it was revealed by God Himself, and preached by His Apostles, men were generally so far from believing it, that some were scandalised, others laughed at it; "We," saith St. Paul, "preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness." The Jews, who expected a temporal Messiah, one that would advance them above all the people upon earth; they were mightily offended, to hear the Apostles say, that Jesus, whom "they had crucified," was the Messiah or Christ: and the Greeks, who pretended to wisdom and knowledge above all other people, they derided them, look-

[1 Tim. 3. 16.]

[Phil. 2. 6-8.]

1 Cor. 1. 23.

ing upon all they said about it, as proceeding only from their ignorance and folly. This was the general opinion both of Jews and Gentiles, concerning the cross of Christ: but what saith the Apostle, by the inspiration and direction of Almighty God? "The preaching of the cross," saith he, 1 Cor. 1. 18. "is to them that perish, foolishness; but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God." It is "foolishness" only to those that "perish;" and who therefore perish, because they reckon the only way, whereby they can be saved, foolishness: but to those who are called and "saved," it appears to be, as it really is, "the wisdom of God, and the power of Ver. 24. God." And therefore the same Apostle, by the same authority, saith, in another place, "I am not ashamed of the Rom. 1. 16. Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto Salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." It is the only means of Salvation, without which, no man ever was or can be "saved;" and it is so powerful a means, that every one that believeth, whosoever he be, may be thereby "saved." And therefore how much soever other people might despise or vilify the "cross" of "Christ," he was "not ashamed to preach" it; yea, he was so far from being ashamed, that he gloried in it: for having told the Galatians, that they who should constrain them to be "circumcised," did it only "lest they themselves should [Ver. 12.] suffer persecution for the cross of Christ;" and that they might "glory in their flesh," being circumcised as theirs was, [Ver. 13.] so bringing them over to their opinion and party; he takes occasion from thence, to break forth into this pathetical Divine expression, "But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom, or whereby, the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

I say, "by whom, or whereby," for the words in the original, δι' οὗ, may be referred either to "Christ" or the "cross;" and accordingly our translation retains both senses, one in the text, the other in the margin, but both amount to the same thing: for what the "cross" doth, it doth it only by the power of Christ, as crucified upon it: and what Christ doth in this great work, He doth it by virtue of His "cross," or that death which He there suffered; and which

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therefore is to be always understood by the "cross" of Christ: not the "cross" simply or abstractedly in itself, but as it was the "cross" upon which Christ died for the sins of the world, and so denotes the death which He suffered upon it. And if we may distinguish between "Christ" and His "cross," in this case, His "cross" may seem more particularly related to, from the Apostle saying, that the "world was thereby crucified to Him, and He to the world."

But that which is chiefly to be here observed is, that the Apostle, when inspired, acted and governed wholly by the Spirit of God, looked upon all things in the world as nothing in comparison of the "cross," or death of our Lord "Jesus Christ," and therefore did not only "glory" in that, but in nothing in the world besides; yea, he abhorred the thoughts of "glorying" in any thing else, and begged of God he might never do it: "Be it far from me," saith he, or, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." From whence we may learn, that all who are sanctified and led by the Spirit of God, as he was, set that value upon the "cross" of "Christ," that they do not only "glory" in it, but they "glory" in it only. Though they do not worship it, as the ignorant Papists do, yet they "glory" in it; and that too, not only above all things else, but so as to "glory" in nothing at all else. And so we must too, if we desire to be like them: which therefore that we may, I shall first shew, that we have no reason to "glory" in any thing without this; and then, what infinite cause we have to "glory," as the Apostle did, "in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

As for the first, we see how all men are naturally apt to "glory" in something or other which they have or do; that is, they value themselves upon it, they applaud themselves for it, they boast of it to others, or, at least, pride and please themselves with the thoughts of it, conceiting themselves to be some way or other better for it. Neither is there any thing upon earth, but some or others thus "glory" in it: but the most common things, and to which all others may be referred, are those specified by the Prophet; saying, in the name of God, "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory

Jer.9.23,24.

in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the Earth." Where we see there are three things wherein Almighty God requires us not to "glory," and only one wherein He would have us do it: the three which contain, in a manner, all that is in this world, are, wisdom, power, and riches, which they who have are very apt to "glory" in; and, at first sight, they may seem to have cause to do so, seeing they are such things as men generally set a great value upon: and they who are possessed of them, being but few in comparison of those who are not, they may seem to be thereby distinguished from, and advanced above the common sort of mankind; and therefore may be thought to have reason enough to "glory" in them: but whatsoever men may do, be sure God doth not think so, but expressly commands the contrary. And if men would but impartially consult their own reason, they would find none to "glory" in such things, but all the reason in the world to obey God, in not glorying in them; for what is the wisdom of this world, but folly? What is the strength, but weakness? What are the riches, but poverty and want in the eyes of Him to whom all things "are naked and open?" As He hath sufficiently demonstrated, in preferring those who have them not before those who have them; and confounding those who have them by those who have them not: "For," as His Apostle saith, "ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise (men), after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble (or rich), are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty: and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." All which words I have produced at length, because they may serve as a comment upon those of the Prophet before quoted, shewing us what little reason men have to "glory" in "wisdom," or "strength," or "riches;" or rather, what

[Heb. 4. 13.]

1 Cor. 1. 26-29.

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great reason they have not to "glory" in them, according as is there commanded. And that the Apostle in this had an eye to that place of the Prophet, appears from his appealing to it, immediately after the words above recited, saying, "But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." For this being written in the said place, it is plain that the Apostle had respect to it, and hath given us also the true meaning of what God there commands us to "glory" in, saying, "But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, and judgment, and righteousness in the earth:" even that this is to be understood of God our Saviour, who is "made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption;" and who therefore exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: "For the law was given by Moses, but (loving-kindness, or) grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." And it came by Him, by virtue of the death which He suffered upon the "cross;" which therefore is the same thing in effect that we are there commanded to "glory" in: for we had never known the Lord, nor that He exerciseth those Divine perfections, but by means of the "cross," upon which He died, and by virtue whereof He still continues to exercise them in the earth. So that all our glorying must still be resolved, at last, into the "cross" of our Lord "Jesus Christ." And therefore when the Apostle speaks of his glorying in other things; as, "I will rather glory in my infirmities;" "It is better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void;" "This is our (glorying, or) rejoicing, the testimony of our conscience." In these and suchlike places St. Hierom rightly observes, *Quod omnis illa gloriatio, ad crucem relata, gloria crucis sit:* 'That all such glory having a relation to the cross, is the glory of the cross.' *Et quicquid dignum in virtutibus perpetratur, hoc fieri ob Domini passionem:* 'And whatsoever is worthily performed in any virtue, is done by reason of our Lord's passion.' For it is only by virtue of that, that we can do any thing that is good and acceptable

1 Cor. 1. 30, 31.

John 1. 17.

2 Cor. 12. 9.

1 Cor. 9. 15.

2 Cor. 1. 12.

[Hieron. tom. iv. Comment. lib. iii. in Gal. 6. p. 316.]

unto God, or receive any grace and power to do it. And therefore when you begin to "glory" in any thing else, your mouths will soon be stopped, if ye do but remember what the Apostle saith, "Who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" To which we may add, How couldst thou have received it, but for the "cross" and passion of the Lord Christ? And therefore what hast thou in the world but that to "glory" in? 1 Cor. 4. 7.

And if we have no cause to "glory" in our virtues or good works, how much less in the things of this world? They are the proper objects of our contempt and scorn, not of our glorying, in that of themselves they can never do us any good, but are often the occasion of men's eternal ruin and perdition, as might easily be shewn; but your own reason and experience may sufficiently convince you that ye have no cause to "glory" in such things as those, nor in any thing else, save the "cross" of our Lord Jesus Christ: and therefore we shall now consider what cause we have to "glory" in that, and in that only, as the Apostle did.

But that we shall soon see, if we do but cast our eye a little upon the "cross," and Him that hung upon it, the Eternal Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, of one substance with the Father, "God blessed for ever:" He having taken our flesh upon Him, and made it one person with Himself, He, in that, was fastened to the "cross," with nails drove through His blessed hands and feet: there He hung three long hours together, not for Himself, but for us and for our sins: there "He His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." There "He redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." There "He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was (there) laid upon Him, that by His stripes we might be healed. All we, like sheep, have gone astray, and have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord there laid on Him the iniquity of us all." There "He laid down His life for the sheep." There "He gave Himself a ransom for all." There "He [Rom. 9. 5.] 1 Pet. 2. 24. Gal. 3. 13. Isa. 53. 5, 6. John 10. 15. 1 Tim. 2. 6. Heb. 9. 26.

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put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." That was the altar upon which He, our true High-Priest, offered up
Chap. 7. 27. Himself a sacrifice for the sins of the world: "Who needed not daily, as the high-priests under the law, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's, for this He did once when He offered up Himself," when
Heb. 2. 9. He offered up Himself upon the "cross:" there "He tasted
John 1. 29. death for every man." There "the Lamb of God took away
1 John 2. 2. the sin of the world." There "He was made a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world." All this our Lord Jesus Christ did upon the "cross;" this He did there for us, for us His creatures, for us His servants, for us His enemies, for us vile dust and ashes. What an honour was this for us, that the Almighty God, the Lord of Life, should die for us, and that too upon the "cross," the most painful, the most ignominious, the only accursed death that any one could die! How can any of us consider this, and not cry out with the Apostle, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Especially if we consider also the great virtues of the "cross;" I mean the glorious effects and consequents of the death which our Lord Jesus suffered upon it: for He
Phil. 2. 9-11. having been "obedient to death, even the death of the cross, therefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in Heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory
Eph. 1. 22, 23. of God the Father." "For He hath put all things under His feet, and hath given Him to be head over all things to the Church, which is His body." So that by virtue of the "cross," He is now exalted at the right hand of God, and
[Matt. 28. 18.] hath "all power" committed unto Him both "in Heaven and earth," and all for the good of His "Church," for the salvation of those who believe in Him; which He is there continually carrying on and accomplishing, by virtue of that sacrifice which He offered up for them upon the altar of the "cross:" for as the high-priest under the Law first offered his sacrifice, and then with the blood of that went into the

most holy place, and there made atonement and reconciliation for the sins of the people; so "Christ being come an High-Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by His own blood, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." He "is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into Heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." For "after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, He for ever sat down at the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till His enemies be made His foot-stool; for by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." He having given Himself a "ransom" for them, He is the "one Mediator between God and them." He is their Advocate with the Father, ever living to make intercession and atonement for them, by virtue of the propitiation which He made for their sins upon the "cross."

Heb. 9. 11, 12. Ver. 24. Chap. 10. 12-14. 1Tim. 2, 5, 6.

How can we hear this, and not rejoice and be glad, and "glory" in the "cross" of our Lord Jesus Christ? in that He having "endured the cross, despising the shame, is now set down at the right hand of the throne of God." That our Lord is now the "Lord of Lords, and King of Kings? That He who loved us, so as to give Himself upon the "cross" for us, hath therefore supreme and absolute authority given Him over the whole creation, and all for us and our salvation? That by virtue of the "sacrifice" which He there offered for our sins, He is now making atonement and reconciliation for us? He is now our "Mediator" and "Advocate" with the Father, and so acceptable to Him, that "whatsoever we ask the Father in His Name, He will give it us." What an honour, what a glory is this to us, that we sinful mortals upon earth should have such a Saviour, such a Lord, such a Priest, such an Advocate in Heaven, and all by virtue of that death which He suffered for us upon the "cross!" What is all the glory which the men of this world so much boast of, in comparison of this? What is it but shame, reproach, and ignominy? Wherefore "God forbid that I should glory in any thing, save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

Heb. 12. 2. [Rev. 17. 14.] John 16. 23.

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But that we may all do it the more effectually, as we have glanced upon the "glory" and "power" which was conferred on Him, let us recollect also the blessings and privileges which accrue to us, by virtue of the "cross" and passion of our ever-blessed Saviour; which are so many and so great, that they can no sooner come into our minds, but they will fill our hearts with joy and exultation: so that there will be no room left for "glorying" in any thing besides. Neither shall we ever think that we can "glory" enough in that, whereby so many "glorious benefits" were merited, and are daily bestowed upon us.

For first; Hereby our sins are pardoned, being all washed away with the blood that was shed upon the "cross;" the
Col. 1. 14. blood of the Son of God: "in whom" therefore "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of (our) sins." For He having undergone the punishments which were due to our sins, our obligation to undergo them was thereby made void and of none effect; as the Apostle there
Col. 2. 13. observes, saying, "And you being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to His cross." There lay a terrible hand-writing against us, for God Himself hath given it under His hand, that
Gal. 3. 10. "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the Book of the Law to do them." But none of us hath continued in all things which are there written, and therefore this hand-writing was against us all; but Christ hath cancelled it, and taken "it out of the way, nailing it to His cross," that it may never be produced against us: for it is fixed there with the same nails that fastened His hands and feet unto the "cross:" so that He there "redeemed us from the curse of the law" before mentioned,
Gal. 3. 13. "being made a curse for us; for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree." But He hung upon a tree, and so underwent the curse which was written in the Law against us; He suffered it in our stead, and therefore hath taken off our obligation to suffer it ourselves. He that doth

not rejoice and "glory" in this, doth not know what true joy or "glorying" is.

Neither is that all, for He being "delivered for our offences, was raised again for our justification." So that our sins are not only pardoned, and the guilt of them taken off, but we are justified or accounted righteous before God, by means of that death to which He was delivered, and which He therefore suffered upon the "cross;" which is so great a privilege, that St. Paul justly preferred it before all things he had or could ever have in this world: "Yea, doubtless," saith he, "and I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him; not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." This is that righteousness of the Saints, whereby they are distinguished from the rest of mankind, and therefore may well "glory" in it, and in the "cross" upon which it was merited for them: for it was there that our Lord Jesus Christ, "who knew no sin," was made sin for us, or an offering for our sins, for that end and purpose, that "we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Rom. 4. 25. Phil. 3. 8, 9. 2 Cor. 5. 21.

From hence issues another unspeakable advantage, which we could never have had any other way, than by the "cross" of Christ; for being thus "justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," who is Himself our peace, and hath reconciled "us unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby." For it pleased God that "in Him should all fulness dwell. And having made peace through the blood of the cross, by Him to reconcile all things to Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in Heaven. And you that were sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled, in the body of His flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprovable in His sight." Where we see, that our peace and reconciliation to God was made upon the "cross" of Christ, by the death which He suffered, by the blood which Rom. 5. 1. Eph. 2. 14. 16. Col. 1. 20-22.

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was shed upon it, therefore called, "The blood of the cross."

Eph. 2. 3. For "by nature" we are all "the children of wrath," the wrath of Almighty God our Maker, who is justly offended and displeased with us for not answering His holy end in making us; for He made us to serve and honour Him, by observing those wise and righteous laws, which He for that purpose hath set us: whereas we have transgressed His said laws, and acted just contrary to what He hath commanded and designed when He was pleased to make us, to the great dishonour of His Holy Name; and therefore are justly under His displeasure, and obnoxious to the direful effects of it, even "eternal death" itself. But His only-begotten Son, having in our nature, and in our stead, suffered death, even the accursed death of the "cross;" He, by virtue of that, is the "Mediator" between God and us, interposing Himself, and making up the breach that is between us. For the blood which He then shed, being the blood of a Person who is God as well as Man, it is of that infinite value, that it did not only satisfy for the dishonour which was cast upon God, by our frustrating His end in making us, but did it with infinite advantage; forasmuch as His Divine perfections shine forth more clearly, so that He receives infinitely more honour by His Son's being obedient to the death of the "cross," than He could have received by the most "perfect obedience" of "all mankind." And as it was of infinite value, so it is likewise of perpetual force and virtue, for all "those who believe in Him," from the beginning to the end of the world, both to restore them to the favour of God, and to keep them always in it. For as the high-priest went every year upon the day of expiation into the Holy of Holies, and there made reconciliation or atonement for the sins of God's peculiar people, with the blood of the sacrifice which he had offered; so Christ, the true "High-Priest," having offered up Himself upon the "cross" for the sins of the world, He, by virtue of the blood which was there shed, not only once a-year, or once a-day, but continually appears in the presence of God, making intercession and reconciliation

1John 1. 29. for them: as it is written of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world," not that took

them away once, but that taketh them away, in the present tense, Καὶ αὐτὸς ἱλασμός ἐστι, 'And He is the propitiation for our sins." He did not only make propitiation for them upon the "cross," but by virtue of that, He "is," He "continually is" the propitiation; so that in Him God is reconciled, or become propitious, gracious, kind and merciful again to us: and so continues, notwithstanding our manifold failures and imperfections, because His Son thus continues to be a propitiation for them; otherwise the best of us would be soon cast out of favour again. But there is no fear of that, "if we" do but "hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end," living with a firm and constant belief, that the man Christ Jesus is the "one Mediator" between God and Men. So that God never did, nor ever will shew any mercy or special favour to any man, but through Him; but that He being "the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world," hath been all along washing His people from their sins in His own blood: that He is now that "Lamb that sitteth upon the throne at the right hand of God:" that He is there continually propitiating and reconciling His Father to us, and so keeps us always in His special love and favour, under His particular care and protection, and the light of His countenance shining continually upon us; and all by virtue of that ransom which He paid, by the propitiation which He once made upon the "cross" for us.

1 John 2. 2.

Heb. 3. 14.

[Rev. 13. 8.]

What cause then, what infinite cause have we to "glory" in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ! For who can express the inestimable benefits which we receive by the reconciliation which He there made for us? What can be desired, what can be imagined more or greater, than to have the Supreme Governor and Disposer of all things our Friend? to have Him reconciled to us, and well pleased with us, and always manifesting His special favour and kindness to us? In His favour is life, and health, and strength, and liberty, and all the good things we are capable of, following directly upon it. By this we are delivered from a thousand dangers, which we ourselves could never have prevented, nor so much as see: by this we are protected from our ghostly Enemy, and from all the temptations and snares that he lays for us: by this all our other "enemies are at peace with

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us," and whatsoever their mind may be, they can have no power to hurt us: by this the "Holy Angels minister" unto us, and "keep us in all our ways:" by this we are sure to have whatsoever we "ask in the name of Christ," so far as it is good for us, and no further: by this all the good works which we sincerely endeavour to do, though imperfect in themselves, yet are acceptable to God, through the same our Lord Jesus Christ: by this we are "preserved from all evil," and have "all things working together for our good:" by this our very "afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:" by this we have a "kingdom prepared for us in Heaven," where we shall perfectly behold and enjoy His love, and live with Him, in "whose presence is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore." All these unspeakable blessings we have, or may have, by the favour of Almighty God, through the merits of that most precious death, which our Lord Jesus Christ was pleased to suffer upon the cross. In short, it is to that we are beholden for all the good things that we either have, or hope for at the hands of God: and therefore, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ."

[John 16. 23.] [Rom. 8. 28.] [2 Cor. 4. 17.] [Ps. 16. 11.]

"By whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." This is that which crowns all the rest, and therefore is particularly named by the Apostle, as the first and chief thing of all, for which we glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; even because that by the cross of Christ, or, which is the same, by Christ, as dying upon the cross, "the world is crucified unto us, and we unto the world;" that is, by it we partake of the Spirit of God, whereby we are enlightened and quickened with a new and spiritual life, and raised up so far above this world, that all its pomp and glory seems as dead to us, and so we seem to it, being no more concerned about any thing in it, than as if we were not in it.

First, I say, we thereby partake of God's Holy Spirit, for that "is shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour," as He is now our Saviour, our Mediator, and Advocate with the Father. And therefore "the Holy Ghost

Tit. 3. 6. John 7. 39.

was not given in a visible manner till Jesus was glorified," to shew, that His coming to His people upon Earth depended upon our Lord's Exaltation in Heaven: "If I go not away," saith He, "the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send Him unto you." "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever." From whence it appears, that all the gifts, and graces, and comforts of the Holy Spirit, which are granted to any of us, are granted only by means of that Intercession, which He makes for us in Heaven, by virtue of the blood that He shed upon the cross for us.

John 16. 7. ch. 14. 16.

But through the blood of the cross, the Holy Ghost is shed so abundantly upon all true believers, that they are thereby cleansed, purified, renewed, and sanctified, so as to be made new creatures, a different sort of people from the men of this world: they now belong, not to the world, but to Christ; "If any man be in Christ," saith the Apostle, "he is a new creature; old things are past away, behold all things are become new." This is that which he here means by "the world being crucified to them, and they unto the world;" as appears from the words immediately following, where the Apostle explains that phrase, saying, "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature;" or rather, 'a new creation,' whereby a man is taken off from this world, and made a fellow-citizen with the Saints, whose business and concerns are all in the other world: "They are not of the world," saith our Lord, "even as I am not of the world." And seeing they are not of the world, but Christ hath chose them "out of the world, therefore the world hateth them." And "as the world hateth them, so they do not love the world, nor the things that are in the world." All which being effected in them, by the power of "Christ crucified," or through the blood which He shed upon the cross, therefore it is here expressed by "the world's being crucified unto them, and they unto the world."

2 Cor. 5. 17. [Eph. 2. 19.] John 17. 16. ch. 15. 19. 1 John 2. 15.

This, therefore, is that for which we ought in a more special manner to "glory" in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and in that only; in that by means of that only, we who

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"were dead in trespasses and sins," upon our repentance and faith in Him, "are quickened with newness of life." [Eph. 2. 1.] We are taught, and led, and sanctified, and governed by the Spirit of God: we live continually under His particular care and conduct; His "grace is always sufficient for us, [2 Cor. 12. 9.] His strength is made perfect in our weakness, the power of Christ resteth upon us:" we are selected and chosen by Him, out of the world, to be His peculiar people, His flock, His lot, and His inheritance: therefore we "crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts." Gal. 5. 24. Rom. 6. 6. For "our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that from henceforth we should not serve sin," but Him whose we are, and by whom alone we live: according to that of His Apostle, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Gal. 2. 20. But they who are thus "crucified" with Christ, must needs be "crucified" to the world; for they are now gone out, and are no longer of it; and this sensible world must needs be "crucified" unto them too, seeing, though they live as yet in the flesh, "they live by faith and not by sense," and [2 Cor. 5. 7.] therefore are no more affected with any thing in this world, than with a dead carcase, that is fit for nothing but to be thrown into the ground, and trampled on: they live above, "their conversations are in Heaven," and therefore all things [Phil. 3. 20.] upon Earth are nothing to them. There is nothing they can love, nothing they can admire, nothing they can glory in, except in Him "who loved them," and gave Himself to die upon the cross for them, and by that means brought them into this blessed state; so that every one of them can heartily join with St. Paul, in saying, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ; by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

But how few are there in the world that can truly say so! Men generally are so bewitched and enchanted with the things of this life, that they "glory" in them more than in their Saviour; such were they which the Apostle speaks of, saying, "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, Phil. 3. 18, 19.

and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things." I need not tell you, there are such among us, you all know it too well, without being told of it, that there are many, to our shame be it spoken, who profess the name of Christ, and yet are so far from glorying in His cross, or giving any "glory" to Him, that "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame." God forbid, that we should be in the number of them, and that we "should glory in any thing, save the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ," or not "glory" in that. [Heb. 6. 6.]

Whilst other people therefore please and flatter themselves with the thoughts of what they have got or hope for in this world, let us rejoice and glory, that the Lord Jehovah is our "strength and our song, and is become our salvation:" that He loved us so as to lay down His life upon the cross for us: that He by that "one oblation of Himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world," and for ours among the rest: that He is therefore now our Advocate with the Father, "ever living to make intercession for us:" that in Him our sins are pardoned, and our Maker reconciled to us: that both our persons and our duties are accepted of, through the merits of His death, and our hearts sanctified by the power of His Holy Spirit: that "the world is thereby crucified unto us, and we unto the world." That "we can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth us: that by virtue of the blood He shed for us upon the cross, He is now preparing a place in Heaven for us: that when this world, and all things in it, shall be destroyed, we may live with Him, glory in Him, and give glory to Him for evermore: this is true "glorying" indeed. God grant that we may all thus "glory in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ." "To whom," &c. [Ps. 118. 14.] [Heb. 7. 25.] [Phil. 4. 13.]

SERMON XXII.

THE EXCELLENCY OF THE SOUL BEYOND WORLDLY GOODS.

MATTHEW xvi. 26.

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

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PROFIT is a thing which all men naturally desire; how much soever they have, at least, of this world, they are still apt to crave more: and the reason is, because our desires are of the same extent with our capacities. Whatsoever we are capable of enjoying, we cannot but desire to have it to enjoy; finding in ourselves a kind of vacuum or emptiness without it, in that we have not as much as we can hold. But we are capable of enjoying more than all this world, even God Himself that made it; and therefore it is impossible that any thing, or all things in this world, should ever fill our souls, and so terminate our desires. Yet nevertheless, while we live in this world, and find the things we meet with in it, pleasing either to our flesh or fancy, our desires are still carried after them, as if they would be of mighty profit and advantage to us; although when we have as much as we at first desired, we are but where we were, our minds being no more satisfied than they were before, but rather much less. This men know, and find by daily experience; and yet, for all that, they will put no stop to their "inordinate desires" of this world, though they find no satisfaction in what they have got as yet, how much soever it is: yea, they hope, if they had more, they should be happy, and so go on, desiring more and more; never

thinking they have enough, nor, by consequence, that they can do enough to get it.

And hence it is that men take so much pains, and undergo so much trouble for this world; they rack their brains, they perplex their minds, they break their sleep, they tire their bodies, they hazard their lives for it: and, as if all this was not enough, they will venture their eternal life itself upon it, and rather "lose their souls," than not gain what they desire of this world. This our Blessed Saviour took notice of while He was upon earth; and lest His own Disciples, as well as others, should be guilty of such egregious folly and madness, He here arms them with an undeniable argument against it: for, having acquainted them, that if they would be, and continue His Disciples, they must "deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him," fearing lest this might seem a very hard lesson, because, by this means, they might lose all they had in the world, yea, and their lives too; He therefore adds, "For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake, shall find it." That is, he who prefers his life before his duty, and thinks by that means "to save it," he shall certainly "lose it," for he shall be condemned to eternal death; whereas he that shall "lose his life for Christ's sake," for adhering to His doctrine, and observing His commands, such a one shall "save his life," for he shall live eternally with Christ Himself. And then, as for the things of this life, lest they should be loth to comply with His precepts, for fear of losing many opportunities which they might otherwise have, of advancing themselves in the wide world, He adds this Divine sentence, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" He speaks by way of interrogation, to make it the more emphatical: as if He had said, Suppose that by the neglect of your duty to Me, ye could get all ye desire in this world; nay, suppose ye could get the "whole world:" yet after all, if ye "lose your souls," as ye will certainly do, all ye get will avail ye nothing; for it is impossible to redeem your souls again, but they will be lost eternally. Which is the more to be observed, because uttered by Christ Himself, who came into the world on

Matt.16.24.

Ver. 25.

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purpose "to save" our souls, and "laid down His own life" to do it; and therefore must needs be highly concerned that we do not, after all, lose them ourselves: as He here plainly supposeth we may do, notwithstanding all that He hath done and suffered to prevent it. Although He had so much love and value for our souls, as to give the greatest price that ever was or can be given, even His own most precious blood for them; yet He knows, that we ourselves are apt to slight and disregard them, and take no more care of them, than as if they were not worth looking after, but prefer every little trifle we meet with in the world before them, and so suffer them to be lost for ever, that we may gain that. Wherefore, to prevent our frustrating, as much as in us lies, the end of His death, as to us and our souls, He here propounds this plain question, which, duly considered, would do it most effectually. For if men would but consider, that whatever they get will be of no advantage to them, if they lose their souls; they could not, surely, but take care of their souls more than of any thing else. But lest you should not give yourselves time to consider of it by yourselves, I shall now put you in mind of it, by explaining these words of our blessed Saviour, so as that you may understand and remember them, I hope, as long as ye live. For which purpose we shall consider,

I. What our Saviour here means by a man's "gaining the whole world."

II. What by a man's "losing his own soul."

III. How a man may "lose his soul" to "gain the world."

IV. That he who does so, gets nothing by it, or hath no profit at all from it.

First, therefore, by "the world" we are here to understand that world where we now live, and all things in it, which men, in their corrupt estate, are apt to admire and value, to love, desire, and seek after: in which sense Christ's beloved Apostle useth the words, where he saith, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." And lest we should mistake his meaning, he there gives us a catalogue or inventory of all that is in the world; "For all that is in the world," saith he, "the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father,

1 John 2.15.

Ver. 16.

but is of the world." Where he plainly reduceth all things that are properly of the world, as it is corrupted, and so contrary to the will of God, unto three heads: "the lusts of the flesh," are such things as please and delight the flesh, and which the flesh therefore lusteth after: "the lust of the eye," that is, earthly riches, which, as separated from carnal pleasures, only please the eye, which therefore lusteth after them, although, as the wise man observes, "it is never satisfied" with them. And then lastly, "the pride of life," or that imaginary honour and grandeur of this life, which fills men with pride and self-conceit. These are the things which make up the world our Lord here speaks of.

Eccles. 4. 8.

Now by "gaining of this world," as ye all know, is meant a man's getting it to himself, into his own possession, that he may look upon it as his, and not another's, and accordingly enjoy it as such: and so by a man's "gaining the whole world," we are to understand his obtaining a right and title to all the pleasures, to all the riches, and to all the honours of this world, so as to be actually possessed of them, to have them all under his command, and at his own disposal, that he may do with them what he will, and enjoy them all and every one as much as he please. This some would think to be a very happy man, as having got a great deal indeed, all that "the whole world" can afford him. But our great Lord and Master did not think so, but assures us, that even such a one, who hath thus "gained the whole world," is no way "profited" by it, nor one jot the better for it, if in the meanwhile he "loseth his own soul."

Secondly, What our Saviour means by that, is the next question to be considered. And there may be some question made of it, for a man may be said to "lose his soul" when he dies, and his soul departs from his body; and so it is the same with a man's losing his life. And when a man "loseth his soul" even in this sense, he can receive no "profit" from any thing he hath got in the "world," because by death he is turned out of possession, and so can enjoy it no longer: but this cannot be the sense of the phrase in this place; for in this sense a man may "lose his soul," and yet be happy: yea, therefore happy because he "loseth his soul;" viz. if he "loseth" it in a good cause, as Christ Himself intimates in

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the verse before my text, saying, that "whosoever will lose his life for my sake, shall find it:" whereas in my text He speaks of such a loss of the soul which is inflicted as a punishment; for so the word ζημιωθῇ, here used, plainly signifies, as might easily be shewn, if it was necessary. But this appears sufficiently from the words following my text: for our Saviour having here asserted, that although a man "gain the whole world," he is no way "profited" by it, if he "lose" his own soul, in the next verse He gives us the reason of this assertion, saying, "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, with His Angels, and then He shall reward every man according to his work." From whence it is manifest, that He speaks of such a "loss of the soul" as men shall be punished with at the Day of Judgment, when they who have been more careful to "gain the world" than to "save" their souls, shall be condemned, both soul and body, to that "everlasting fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels;" "where," as Christ Himself saith, "the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," where their own "consciences" are always tormenting them, and can never be pacified; where the "fire" of God's wrath is always burning in their breasts, and can never be abated; where they are continually hurried about with the fiends of Hell, and the furies of their own minds, and so have never any rest or quiet; where they meet with all their debaucheries and vices of all sorts again, and are tormented with the remembrance of them ten thousand times more than ever they were before delighted in them; where they have nothing that is good, nothing that is pleasant, nothing that is convenient, nothing so much as tolerable or easy to them, but every thing that can disturb and vex them to the heart; where, as the Apostle speaks, they are punished with "everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power," where they clearly apprehend Almighty God, that made them, angry and displeased with them, and resolved never to be reconciled to them; and, by consequence, where they are fully assured, that this shall be their "portion," their "bitter portion for ever."

[Matt. 25. 41.]

Mark 9. 44.

2 Thess. 1. 9.

This is the sad estate of a "lost" condemned soul, and the soul that is condemned to such a state as this, is "lost"

indeed; for it is "lost" and undone to "all eternity." And this is that which our Saviour here means, by a "man's losing his own soul," even when he doth not take care to keep it from eternal misery and torment.

But are there any such men in the world? Men that "lose their souls to gain the world?" Surely it is impossible! For men are reasonable creatures, and able to discern betwixt good and evil. We see every day how ingenious they are in managing their trades and merchandise to their best advantage; how careful not to be imposed upon in any matter; how strict and exact in all their bargains and contracts, how prudent and critical in the choice of what they buy: how then can it be imagined, that any should be so weak, or rather so mad, as to sell all they have for nothing; or, which is all one, "to lose their own souls to gain the world?" It is true, one cannot but wonder there should be such men in the world; and I could heartily wish there were none: but our Blessed Saviour, who is thoroughly acquainted with all men's hearts and actions, here plainly supposeth there are such men in the world, and we have just cause to fear there are too many of them amongst ourselves! As you will also grant, after you have duly considered what I promised to shew in the next place, even how men usually "lose their souls for the world," to "gain" that.

Thirdly, This, I confess, is a very melancholy subject, I cannot think of it without grief and trouble, much less should I speak of it in this place, but that I think it my duty to put you in mind of it; that, knowing how men "lose their own souls" for the sake of this world, and who they are who do so, you may take more heed for the future not to be in the number of them. For which purpose, although I shall speak only of men in general, that I may not be thought to aim at any particular person; yet I would desire you all to consider seriously what is said, and to apply it every one to himself, so as to recollect and bethink himself, whether he be not one of these I speak of, who have so great esteem and value for the world, as to "lose their own souls" for it.

First, therefore, all they "lose their souls" for the "world," who, for fear of losing something in it, will not or do not embrace and hold fast the true religion, wherein their souls

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may be kept and saved: this hath been the case of many in all ages, and so it is to this day. Indeed, this hath been the great reason all along, why so many have refused to profess the "Christian religion," and is still the great reason, why of those who profess it, there are so few that live up to it, even because if they should do so, they must part with something they have already gotten, or else be hindered in their getting more of this world. We have a sad instance of this in a young man who came to our Saviour, and asked Him, "What good thing" he must do, that he might have "eternal life?" and when our Lord had told him, that he must "keep the commandments," he seemed to be much pleased with it, because, as he said, he had kept those which our Saviour mentioned "from his youth:" but when our Lord said to
Matt.19.22. him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven, and come and follow me;" then it is said, "When the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions." He had "great possessions," and he was loth to "lose" them to "save his soul," and therefore lost his "soul" to "save" them. Which our Lord no sooner observed, but He presently said, "Verily I say unto you, that a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of Heaven;" and lest His Disciples should not take sufficient notice of what He then said, or soon forget it, He repeats it again
Ver. 23. 24. with an emphasis, "And again I say unto you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The reason of which sad truth is plainly this, even because they who have much of this world, are apt to set their hearts so much upon it, that it is almost impossible, at least, it is extremely difficult to persuade them to think seriously of parting with it, and of going naked into the other world, where they will be stript of all they had in this. This would damp all the pleasure they fancy to themselves in their great estates; and therefore rather than do that, they let go all thoughts of their future state, and take no more care of their "souls," than as if they had no "souls" to take care of, and so "lose" them, to gain and enjoy the world.

Thus when St. Paul was teaching the Ephesians the way

of salvation, and for that purpose persuading them to leave the worship of Diana and other idols, and to worship only the true God; Demetrius the silversmith, who made shrines for Diana, and other craftsmen of the like occupation, rejected all he said, because, by that means, as they themselves confessed, their "craft was in danger to be set at nought." Which was as much as to say, that if they should turn Christians to "save their souls," they should lose their trade; and for their part, they were resolved to keep their trade, whatsoever became of their souls: and though all did not speak out so plainly, yet this was at the bottom of all the opposition which the Christian religion ever met with; and to this day, this is the great reason why so few, either Turks or Heathens are converted to it: and so it is likewise, why of those many which are admitted into it, there are so few, so very few that live worthy of it, so as to be "saved" in it,—even for fear of losing their estates, or trades, or offices, or something or other which they either have or hope for in this world. How many such men there are, and always have been upon the earth, I need not, or rather I cannot tell you; we have too much ground to fear they are the far greatest part of mankind: yet all, and every one of these do clearly lose and destroy their souls for the sake of this world, that they may either get or keep something they value in it. And whether they will believe it now or no, they will most certainly find it to be so at the Last Day. Acts 19. 27.

And as they who refuse to embrace it, so they likewise who have embraced it, but afterwards renounce or forsake the true religion, upon any worldly account, are all in the number of these who "lose their own souls to gain the world." Such are those professed Christians who, being taken by Turkish pirates at sea, or soldiers at land, to save their bodies from pain, and to advance themselves in the place whither they are carried captive, forsake their religion, and, I dread to speak it, renounce their Saviour Himself. Such are they also, who conversing and trafficking with Infidels or Heathens, the better to insinuate themselves into them, and to promote their trade and commerce with them, lay aside the name of Christ, and comply, at least seemingly, with them in their superstitions and idolatries;

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and so, in effect, "deny Christ" among men, and then "He
Matt.10.33. will deny them before His Father which is in Heaven." Such are they too, who, though they do not apostatise from the Christian religion, yet leave the Communion of the true Catholic Church, and turn Papists, Heretics, or Schismatics, only to get, or keep the favour of some persons, who may be kind and helpful to them in carrying on their trade, or some other worldly business: such a one was Demas, of
2 Tim. 4.10. whom St. Paul saith, "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed to Thessalonica." He did not leave off the profession of the Christian faith, but he forsook St. Paul the Apostle, and so the Church Apostolical, and turned Gnostic, or some such kind of Heretic; and all for the love of this world, which made him also haste to Thessalonica, which at that time was a place of great trade. Such likewise are they, who being bred up in error, ignorance, and superstition, in heresy, schism, or any false religion, will not come over from it to the true Church of Christ, for fear of losing their interest in the party or faction they are of, which may diminish their trade, or hinder some worldly design they have in hand. Such, lastly, are they, who by the blessing of God, are well disposed in their youth, and have begun to set upon a pious, sober, and religious course of life; but afterwards, when they come into the world, for the sake of that, "leave their first love," and lay aside the thoughts of serving God, or taking care of their souls any more. All such as these plainly prefer the world before their souls, and so "lose their souls" to "gain the world."

To these we may add, in the next place, all such as continue in the profession of the true religion, and keep up external Communion with the Church, but are so in love with the world, and so thoughtful and solicitous about it, that they neglect the duties which are required of them, and the means of grace which are there administered. Of this sort are they who are so busy and encumbered with the world, that they can find no time for their private devotions, but can spend a whole day, yea, perhaps many days together, without ever retiring from this, to think of the other world, and pray to God to prepare them for it; and so "live as

without God in the world." And so are they too, who mind their worldly affairs upon the Lord's Day, when they should be wholly employed in serving God, and "working out their own Salvation," and so do not afford themselves so much as one day in seven to look after their souls. Next to these, are they who neglect, not only their private, but their public devotions too, all the week long; for fear, lest if they should come to them, they may, perhaps, lose a good customer, or an opportunity either of buying or selling something to their great advantage in this world: who cannot deny but that if they could spend an hour every day in God's house, in praising Him for what they have, in praying to Him for what they want, and in hearing His most Holy Word solemnly read, and His Will openly declared to them; it would conduce very much, as to God's glory, so likewise to the comfort, edification, and eternal Salvation of their own souls; yet for all that, they cannot be persuaded to it: they cannot but acknowledge it is good to come to Church, but they think it better to stay at home. They might, perhaps, receive some benefit by praying to God, but they hope to get more by conversing with men; that is, in plain English, they love the world more than they love God, or their own souls: and that, after all, is the reason, why so few frequent our public prayers, and our Churches are so empty upon the week days, even because men generally neglect their souls, and care not, in a manner, what becomes of them, so they can but provide for their bodies, and increase their estates in this world. And whether this be not "losing men's souls" for the gaining of this "world," judge ye?

[Eph. 2. 12.] [Phil. 2. 12.]

I am sorry that I have so much reason to put you, that now hear me, in mind of another sort of men under this head, or rather the same men upon another account; I mean, such as cannot find in their hearts, to spare so much time from the world, as is requisite to prepare themselves for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and therefore seldom or never come to it, as if it was not worth their while to wait upon their Saviour, when they have any thing else to do: but I do not wonder they have so little regard for Him, who came to save their souls, seeing they have so

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little for their own souls, which He came to save. But let all such know, that their neglecting of those happy opportunities, which they have here of receiving the body and blood of their ever-blessed Saviour, is nothing else but "losing their own souls" for this world, and that they will find when it is too late.

There is still another way behind, whereby men commonly do the same thing, even by using unjust, unlawful, and indirect means for promoting their trade, increasing their estates, or getting any thing in this world. This is the way, to our shame be it spoken, that men generally walk in, and wherein they lose themselves and their souls for ever: for this is all they do who wrong others to enrich themselves; all that rob upon the high-way, pick pockets, or break open houses; all that forge deeds, forswear themselves, or suborn others to do so, in law-suits; all that willingly cheat, defraud, or overreach their neighbours, in buying or selling their goods; all that pilfer and steal, or so much as withhold or conceal that which they know belongs to another; all that are able, and yet will not pay what they owe, but lie in prison, or hide themselves, or at least pretend they cannot do it; all that smuggle the king's customs, or corrupt his officers, and by that means keep to themselves what the law hath made due to him; all that refuse or neglect to relieve those of their relations or others, which are really in need, and so withhold from them the maintenance which God hath appointed for them; all that oppress and gripe poor workmen in their prices, or servants in the wages which are due to them; all that work upon people's necessities, and extort from them more than the laws of the land allow of; all that follow such unlawful trades as tend to the corrupting of youth, and to the nourishing of vice and wickedness in the world; all that by false weights or measures, by lying or over-reckoning, or by any trick impose upon those they deal with; and all that are conscious to themselves, that by these, and such like unlawful ways, they have got other men's money, goods, or estates in their hands, and yet will not restore them again to their right owners, as far as they are able: these all as plainly "lose their souls" for this world, as if they should make a solemn

contract or bargain with the Devil, that upon condition they may have such and such things at present, he shall have their souls for ever; for so he will, and leave them in the lurch too: he will serve them in their own kind; as they cheated others, he will cheat them, and put them off with nothing but dreams and fancies, instead of the great profit and advantage they expected. For after all, whatsoever they have thus gotten with "the loss of their souls," will be so far from countervailing the loss they sustain for it, that it will do them no good at all, no more than as if they had never gotten it. This they may be sure of, for they have the Word of wisdom and truth itself for it, saying, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" that is, he hath no profit at all by it; which being asserted by Christ Himself, we have all the reason in the world to believe it, whether we see any other reason for it or no; His asserting of a thing, being the foundation of our belief, and not the reason of the thing itself: and therefore, whatsoever He asserts, though it be ever so much above our reason, and we cannot possibly imagine how it should be so, that is all one, we are still bound to believe it as much as if we could, because it is asserted by Him who cannot lie. But in this case, the reason of the thing is as plain as His assertion of it; so that if we do but consult our own reason, we cannot but believe and acknowledge, that if a man should gain the whole world, he would be no way profited by it, if he lose his own soul; as I promised to shew you in the last place.

Fourthly, Now, to prove this, I shall not insist upon the excellency of the soul above all things imaginable in this world, as it is a spiritual, an immaterial, an intelligent, an immortal substance, wherein it so far exceeds this material and transient world, with all things in it, that to give or lose a soul for the whole world is infinitely greater folly, than to sell the greatest and best pearl that was ever found, for the least and worst grain of sand upon the sea-shore: I shall not, I say, insist upon this, because, though it be true, it is not to the purpose; for our Saviour doth not here speak of a man's soul, as it is in its own nature, but as it is a man's own soul, and so, in a manner, himself: and if a man's self

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be lost, or which is all one, "his soul," whatsoever he hath gotten besides, be sure, can never do him any good; no, not although, as our Saviour here speaks, it should be "the whole world."

But to make this as plain as I can to you, let us suppose, that a man hath got into his coffers all the gold and silver that ever was, or still is in America, and all the pearls, diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and other precious stones of the East Indies; suppose he hath got into his bags and boxes all the peppers and spices of Malabar, Sumatra, the Molucca and Philippine Islands; suppose he hath got into his granaries all the rice of Syria and Indostan, and all the corn of Egypt, and all other places wheresoever it is sown; suppose he hath got into his stables all the elephants, dromedaries, camels, horses, and all sorts of beasts, both tame and wild, that are to be found in any part of the world; suppose he hath got into his garden all the flowers, plants and trees that ever grew upon the face of the earth; suppose he hath got into his wardrobe all the tapestries and silks of Persia, the sables and furs of Muscovy and Siberia, with all the fine cloths of France and Italy; suppose he hath got into his cellars all the rich wines of Spain or Portugal, France, Hungary, or wheresoever else they are made; suppose he hath got into his warehouses all the goods and commodities that ever men traded for in any part of the world; suppose again, that all the kingdoms of the earth were his, and all the men, women and children in Europe, Asia, Africa and America entirely under his command, and at his disposal, that he might do with them what he will, as being all his "slaves" and "vassals:" this you would all think to be a very "rich man," and one who might be truly said to have gotten "the whole world." It is true, no man ever did, nor is ever likely to get so much; but "our Saviour," for argument's sake, supposeth a man may do it; and, after Him, let us suppose the same too: but let us also, with Him, suppose that this man "loseth his own soul;" and then, what will all this that he hath gotten "avail him?" What will he be the better for it? No more, than as if he had never had one groat in the whole world.

For, first, so soon as ever a man hath "lost his soul," even

in the lowest sense, so that his soul only departs from his body, he is immediately turned out of possession of all that he had gotten; it is no longer his, no more than as if he had never gotten it, but other people fall a scrambling for it: as we read of Alexander the Great, who had conquered many kingdoms, and so had got as much, if not much more of this world, than ever any man besides him had. And yet he was no sooner dead, but his great captains fall together by the ears about what he had gotten, and at last parcelled it out among themselves, some getting one part, and others another; but he himself had no more, than just ground enough for his body to lie on, which every man hath as well as he. The same may be observed every day: when a man hath taken a great deal of care and pains to get an estate, at the same moment that he "loseth his soul," he loseth all that he hath gotten, and goes as "naked out of the world" [Job 1. 21.] as "he came" into it; and so he would, although he had "gained the whole world."

But suppose, for once, that which is impossible, that a man could retain his right and title to what he got while he was alive, even after he is dead, it would still be the same thing; he could receive no more "benefit" for it, than as if he had no right or title at all to it, for the body without the soul is no more capable of enjoying any thing, than a mere stone or log of wood is. And therefore when a man's "soul" is "once lost," all he ever had, though it was the whole world, is all "lost" with it, as to all intents and purposes whatsoever.

But this is not all; for, as I observed before, by the losing of a man's soul, we are here to understand its ruin and destruction in "Hell fire," where it is lost and undone for ever. Now, suppose a man hath gotten all that I before spoke of, even the whole world, but, after all, "loseth his own soul," so as to be condemned to everlasting flames and torment; what comfort can he now take? What "profit" can he now receive from any thing he had before? He is now confined to a dark dungeon, where he hath not the least glimpse of light, nor any other company but devils and damned souls like himself, which are always "weeping and wailing, and gnashing their teeth," fretting and vexing, and

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tormenting themselves with the thoughts of their former sins and follies, and of God's just wrath and indignation against them. And he is in the same wretched condition, as full of pain and trouble, grief and anguish, shame, confusion and torment, as his "soul" can hold.

But if a man hath "gained the whole world," although he hath "lost his soul," cannot he purchase his freedom, and redeem his soul again from this insupportable slavery and bondage? No surely, it is impossible. For as our Saviour here argues, "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Will he give "the whole world?" We suppose he had it once to give, but now he hath it not, and therefore cannot give it; and if he had it still, whom would he give it to? Would he give it to God? It is his already. Would he give it to the Devil, in whose hands he is? It was he that got him "the world" for "his soul," and therefore he, be sure, will never give him "his soul" back again for "the world." Indeed, this "world," this "whole world," is not a sufficient ransom, or price of redemption for a man's "soul;" a man's "soul" being of far greater worth and value than all other creatures upon the face of the earth. And if it could have been redeemed by any thing else, the eternal Son of God would never have come down from Heaven, much less would He have died for that purpose.

[1 Pet. 1. 18, 19.] But as St. Peter observes, "We are not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot." But this precious blood of Christ is no part of this world; and therefore, although a man hath got the whole world, unless he hath that too, he hath nothing to give in exchange for his soul. This David long ago observed, saying, "There be some that put their trust in their goods, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches. But no man may deliver his brother" (or his own soul), "nor make agreement unto God for him; for it cost more to redeem their souls, so that he must let that alone for ever." And so he must do, although the "whole world" was still his own, if he hath lost his "soul;" for the "soul" that is once lost, is lost for ever. So long as it is in the body, Christ is both able and ready to redeem and save it; but if it be once got

Ps. 49. 7, 8.

to Hell, there it must remain to the extremity of misery and torment, without any hopes of being ever redeemed. As Christ will not, nothing in the world beside can do it; though he gained the "world" with the "loss of his soul," he can never gain his "soul" again with the "loss" of the "whole world."

But although a man who hath got the "whole world," and lost his "soul," cannot get his "soul" again, though he would give all "the world" for it; yet will it not be a pleasure, or at least a mitigation of his grief and sorrow for his loss, that he was once lord paramount of all "this world?" So far from that, that it will be a great aggravation of his pain and trouble, to remember how far he has fallen; that he once had all things which "this world" could afford him, and now nothing at all; once he thought himself the most happy, but now finds himself the most miserable of all creatures. The thoughts whereof must needs grate very much upon his mind, and add fuel to the flames which burn him. And so, in proportion, the more a man hath in "this world," if he lose "his soul," the greater is his "loss," and the more his sorrow in the next.

That ye may see more clearly into the truth of all this, and so be more deeply affected with it, I desire you to cast your eye a little upon what is written in the Gospel concerning Dives and Lazarus, or the "rich" and the "poor" man; and that too from Christ's own mouth, who perfectly knew what is done in the other world as well as this. The rich man was exceeding rich, and therefore was "clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day:" the poor man was so very poor, that he had no bread to eat, but what he "begged" for; and for that purpose, not being able to go himself, by reason of his sores and weakness, he was carried by others, and "laid at the rich man's gate," so that he could not but see him every time that he went in or out of his house. Here the poor man lay, "desired to be fed," not with any of the dainties, but with "the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table;" either by chance, or as being thrown down for the dogs which were under it, and came afterwards and "licked the poor man's sores," as being half dead, and not able to keep them off. This was

Luke 16. 19.

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the condition of these two men in this world; now let us see how it fared with them in the next.

"And it came to pass," saith our Lord, "that the beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into Abraham's bosom." It seems he had other kind of attendants about him than the dogs, and better than their master himself; for there were several of the "Holy Angels" waiting upon him, and expecting his departure: and so soon as ever his soul was loosened from his body, away they carried it immediately into Abraham's bosom, one of the highest places in Heaven, next to the "Father of the Faithful," in his "very bosom," where he had all the good things that his soul could desire.

[Rom. 4. 11.]

After this, the "rich man also died." The poor man died first, as being fit for Heaven; the rich man had a longer time given, wherein to prepare himself for death, but he neglected it: and afterwards he also, for all his riches, "died and was buried;" that was all he had of his riches when he was dead, that his body was buried with a great deal of state and pomp, I warrant you. But what became of his soul? The next news we hear of that, is, that it was scorching in Hell fire; for it follows in the text, "And in Hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." The same Lazarus whom he had so often seen lying and begging at his gate, he now sees him with Abraham in Heaven, whilst he himself was with the Devils in Hell: at which sad sight he cried out, "Father Abraham have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." He calls Abraham father, because the Jews usually did so, as being his offspring. But what! would he have him send and fetch him out of that place? No, he knew that it could not be; and therefore he begged as little as he could, not so much as Lazarus used to beg of him: for Lazarus begged bread of him; not water, that he could have enough of every where: but the rich man begs not bread, but water, and as little of that too as could be imagined; he only begged that Lazarus might "dip the" very "tip of his finger in water, and cool his tongue." But he could not have so much as that; for Abraham said, "Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime

Luke 16.24.

John 8. 39.

Luke 16.25.

receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented." A sad memento! whereby he was put in mind of his great estate, his fine clothes, his sumptuous diet, and all the good things he once had, and accounted them his own good things, and used them accordingly, only for his own pride and pleasure: and now, poor man (for so we may now call him), he hath not so much as "one drop of water to cool his inflamed tongue."

I have insisted the longer upon this, because I look upon it as the most lively description that was ever made of the different states of good and bad men in the "other world," of those who have kept, and those who have "lost" their "own souls;" and as a most clear explication and confirmation of my text. For what good had this rich man now from all his goods? What was he profited by them, now that he had "lost his own soul?" And what could he "give in exchange for his soul," when he had not so much as one drop of water left him? but instead of that, is now tormented in Hell fire, and so must be for ever.

Now, I beseech you, brethren, put all this together, and then consider seriously with yourselves, whether all that you can ever get by the care and pains you take for "this world," will countervail the loss of "your souls?" Whether if you lose your "own souls," it would be any "profit" or "advantage" to "gain," if it were possible, the "whole world?" And, by consequence, whether it be not your wisdom and your interest to take more care of your "souls," than you do of any thing, or of all things in the "world" besides? I am confident, that if ye would but lay aside your prejudices for a while, and set yourselves in good earnest to consider of it, ye could not but acknowledge it to be so; ye could not but acknowledge, that it concerns you more, infinitely more, to "save your souls," than to "gain this world," or any thing in it.

This, therefore, is that which I would now advise you to. I do not question but that ye are diligent and industrious in your particular callings; and so ye ought to be: but I beseech you to remember, that ye have another "world" to live in as well as this; and that ye have "souls" to look

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after as well as bodies, spiritual and immortal souls, that must live for ever, either in joy or torment: whereas your bodies last but a while, and then are carried back again to the earth, from whence they were taken. It is true, they will be raised again at the last day, and fare as your "souls" do in the "other world." If your souls be happy, your bodies will be happy too; and if your souls live in misery and pain, so will your bodies to all eternity: and therefore by taking care of your "souls," ye will take the best care ye can of your bodies also; whereas by neglecting them, you will lose both.

And besides, after all your moiling and toiling for the world, ye are never sure to get any thing considerable in it: what ye get, ye do not know how soon ye may lose it; and while ye have it, ye may be never the better for it. But if ye take care of your "souls" before all things else in "this world," ye will most certainly both save them, and have all things else given you into the bargain: for this, ye have Christ's own word, saying, "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;" whereas if you lose your "souls," whatsoever else ye get, will avail you nothing.

Matt. 6. 33.

Wherefore I pray and beseech you all, as ye have any regard to your own good and welfare, that ye would, for the future, concern yourselves in good earnest about your "souls;" at least take as much care of them as ye do for the "world." Ye study all ways possible to prevent any loss in your estates or trades; do the same for your "souls:" take all the heed ye can that they be not lost for ever. You contrive and forecast each day how to manage your worldly affairs to the best advantage; do the same for your "souls:" let no day pass without considering how to "work" out your "Salvation" the most "effectually," and to make your "calling and election sure." You avoid every thing that will lessen your trade, impair your estates, or hinder your improvement of them; do the same for your "souls," forsake and avoid whatsoever will destroy them or hinder their Salvation, as all manner of vice and wickedness will most certainly do. You often cast up your books, to see how you thrive in the "world;" do the same for your "souls:"

[2 Pet. 1. 10.]

"examine yourselves" often, "whether ye be in the faith," and whether you "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." You catch at all opportunities you can find of increasing your estates, and bettering your condition in this "world;" do the same for your "souls." You have many opportunities put into your hands of improving your spiritual state, and fitting your "souls" for Heaven; you may every day hear the Word of God read, and join together in praying to Him for mercy and grace, and all things necessary for the saving of your souls; you may every week partake of Christ's most blessed body and blood, and so of all the merits of His death, by whom alone your souls can be ever saved. These are the great means that God hath appointed for the Salvation of your souls: do not slight or neglect them any longer, lest ye repent of it, as be sure ye will, when it is too late; but use them heartily, sincerely, constantly, as ye ought, and you will find them, by God's blessing and assistance, effectual to the fixing your hearts on Him, and to the confirming your faith in Christ, that when ye go out of this world, ye may, with St. Stephen, commit your souls into His hands, who will be sure to save and preserve them to eternal life; for He will receive them to Himself, He will wash and cleanse them from their sins in His own blood, and so present them to His Father "without spot and blemish," that they may live with Him and His Holy Angels in the highest glory and happiness which they can possibly enjoy, for ever and ever. Amen.

[2 Cor. 13. 5.] [2 Pet. 3. 18.]

[2 Pet. 3. 14.]

SERMON XXIII.

A SPIRITUAL LIFE THE CHARACTERISTIC OF A CHRISTIAN.

Rom. viii. 9.

Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.

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These words may give us just occasion to speak of the Holy Spirit of God, and the wonderful works He hath done, and still doth in the world. But who is sufficient for these things? "Who can express the noble acts of the Lord, or shew forth all His praise?" Who can describe His infinite glory, or declare His gifts and graces, that are innumerable? This is a subject fit for the pen or tongue of an Angel. We mortals upon earth know nothing of Him, but what He Himself is pleased to tell us in His Holy Word; and what we there read can never enter into our minds, unless He Himself also be pleased to open our understandings, and so make way for it. But our comfort is, that our "Blessed Saviour" hath assured us, that He, and in Him our heavenly Father, will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him."

[Ps. 106. 2.]

Luke 11.13.

"In confidence whereof, we therefore humbly beseech Thee, O Heavenly Father, to give us Thy Holy Spirit, to lead us into all truth, that, by His inspiration and direction, we may have a right judgment in all things, speak nothing of Him but what is true, and receive the truth in the love of it; to the glory of Thy great name, through Jesus Christ our Mediator and Advocate, now appearing in Thy presence for us."

Having thus prayed to Almighty God, in the name of His Son, to direct and assist us by His Holy Spirit, in speaking

of Him, and nothing doubting but that He, according to His Word, hath granted our request; we shall now make bold to do it, from the words which I have now read: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

Wherefore we may first take notice, that in the former part of this verse He is called the "Spirit of God," in this latter the "Spirit of Christ," to teach us, that He is the "Spirit of Christ," as Christ is God, and that Christ is truly God, "one with" the Father; otherwise the "same Spirit" could not be the "Spirit of Christ" and "of God" too. And as He is thus usually in Holy Scripture called sometimes the "Spirit of God," and sometimes the "Spirit of Christ;" so, at other times, He is called absolutely the "Holy Spirit," or, which is the same, the "Holy Ghost," especially where the Three Divine Persons are all named together, to shew, that although He be the "Spirit" both of the Father and the Son, yet so as to be a distinct Person from both, as each of the other Persons also is; as in the place last quoted, "There are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these Three are One." They are expressly said to be "Three," and "Three" in the masculine gender, that is commonly used to signify a person; whereby we are given to understand, that they are "Three" distinct Persons, properly so called, according to our common way of speaking: but then it follows, οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἓν εἰσι, 'these Three are One,' "Three" in the masculine, "One" in the neuter gender; not εἷς, 'one Person,' but ἕν, 'one Thing,' one Jehovah, one Essence, or Substance: as the Son Himself also asserts of Himself and the Father.

Matt.28.19; 2 Cor.13.14; 1 John 5. 7.

John 10. 30.

And therefore whatsoever personal distinctions (which we can never comprehend) there may be between the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, either among themselves, or in their ways of working, yet we must still apprehend and believe them all "Three" to be but "One" and the "same God;" for as St. Paul expresseth it, "There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." Here is "one" Spirit, "one" Lord Jesus, "one"

1 Cor.12.4-6.

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God the Father; these "all" and "every one" worketh all in all, and therefore must needs be "all one," and the same first cause of all, or, as we say, "one God."

It is true, our finite understandings, in their highest perfection, could never reach this, no more than they can any other of those infinite perfections which we believe to be in God; much less can we do it in our corrupt and imperfect state. But the best of it is, as we are not able, so we are not bound to understand it, but only to believe it: and we have all the reason that can be to believe it, in that it is revealed to us by God Himself, and therefore also revealed, that we might believe it, upon His Word, without troubling our heads about the way and manner how "three" distinct Divine Persons subsist in "one" and the same Divine Essence, so as to be "one" and the "same God;" which being infinitely above us, it would be the height of pride and presumption in us to offer at bringing it down to our capacities. It is sufficient for us, that we have the infallible Word and testimony of God for it; and that we accordingly believe, that "the Father is God, the Son God, and the Holy Ghost God; and yet they are not three Gods, but one God: that God the Father made us, God the Son redeemed us, and God the Holy Ghost sanctifieth us;" and yet that "one" and the "same God" made, redeemed, and sanctifieth us: for whatsoever is said in the Holy Scriptures to be done by any of these Divine Persons, the same, in other places, is said to be done by God. But there is only "one" living and true God; and therefore, although we must believe in each Person distinctly, contemplate upon what He hath done, and, upon occasion, address ourselves to Him as such, yet we must still keep close to the Unity of the Divine Essence or Substance, which, if it was divided or divisible, would not be Divine.

As when I think of God the Son, as in a peculiar manner my Redeemer and Saviour, I must not apprehend Him as any other, but the "one" living and true God, that made and governs the world, and accordingly praise and magnify Him as such, as the Blessed Virgin did, saying, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour." And when we read, as we do in my text, or

[Luke 1. 46.]

speak of the "Spirit of Christ," although we must believe the "Spirit" to be "one" Person, and "Christ" another, yet we must still believe them both to be "one" in "nature" or "substance," both the "one" Almighty and Eternal "God;" who, whether He act as Father, Son, or Holy Spirit, it is still one and the same God that doth it.

As in the former part of this verse it is said, "If the Spirit of God dwell in you;" in the next verse, "If Christ be in you:" so in several other places of Holy Writ, sometimes Christ is said to "be," or "dwell in us." At other times the same thing is expressed by the Spirit's "being" or "dwelling" in us; whereby we are given to understand and believe, that "Christ" and the "Spirit" is the same God; so that wheresoever either dwells, that is the "temple of God." Hence also it is, that as our Saviour often promised His Disciples, that when He was gone from them He would send them "His Holy Spirit;" He elsewhere promised the same thing, by saying, that He Himself would come to them, that we may never doubt, but that howsoever Christ and the Holy Spirit are distinguished from one another, as well as from the Father, by their personal properties, yet in essence or nature they are the same. Which I therefore observe here, and desire you to keep it always in your minds, because it will be of great use both to the settling your faith aright, concerning the most Holy Trinity, and likewise to your understanding of what we are farther to consider in these words.

Eph. 3. 17; 2 Cor. 13. 5. 1 Cor. 3. 16; 6. 19.

1 Cor. 3. 16.

John 14. 18.

The next thing to be considered here is, that the Holy Spirit is here called the "Spirit of Christ," the Son of God; as He is also in 1 Pet. i. 11; Phil. i. 19; Gal. iv. 6. And therefore although it be nowhere expressly said, that He proceedeth from the Son, as it is, that He "proceedeth from the Father," yet we have the same ground to believe the one, as we have to believe the other; forasmuch as to be the "Spirit" of the "Son," is but another way of expressing His procession from Him, and the clearer of the two, in that it can admit of no dispute, as the other may: which I therefore observe, because by this we may see, that although the Greek Church doth not agree with the Latin in the word, yet they do in the thing; they own the "Spirit" to be the

John 15. 26.

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"Spirit" of the "Son," as well as of the Father, which is the same thing in effect with what we mean by His procession. And, therefore, whatsoever reason they may have to be against the inserting the word *Filioque* into the Nicene Creed, without the consent of a general council, we have none to accuse them of any great error, much less of heresy, in this great article of our faith.

But why is He here called, in a special manner, "the Spirit of Christ?" This is that which I design chiefly to enquire into; for as there is great reason, doubtless, why every thing in Holy Scripture is expressed just as it is, so in this place particularly, why the "Holy Spirit" is not called the "Spirit" of the Father, or the "Spirit" of God, nor simply the "Holy Spirit," but in a peculiar manner the "Spirit of Christ." And that which I conceive to be the reason in general, is this, because the "Apostle" is here speaking of the "Holy Spirit," as "given" by Christ, to those who "believe" in Him, and to none else, saying, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His;" and therefore it was most proper to call Him here "the Spirit" of "Him" by whom He is given. But there being more in this than what may appear at first sight, I shall endeavour to explain it more particularly in these following propositions.

1. God the Father is represented to us in Holy Scripture, as the Maker and Governor of the world in general; and God the Son as the Saviour and Redeemer of the world in particular. He hath been so all along, ever since their fall, continually working in them, "both to will and to do of His good pleasure;" according as He Himself said, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work."

[Phil. 2. 13.]

John 5. 17.

2. As God the Father made and preserveth all things by His Word and Spirit, according to that of the Psalmist, "By the Word of the Lord were the Heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth," so God the "Son" carrieth on and accomplisheth His great work of "saving" men by the "same Spirit" as "proceedeth" from Him, and so in a peculiar manner "His Spirit."

Ps. 33. 6.

3. By this it was that He revealed Himself and His will, and all things necessary for men to know, believe, or do, that they may be saved. For, as He raised up Pro-

phets in all ages to do it, so what they spake as such, was first dictated to them by the Holy Ghost, which came upon them, and entered into them, so that "they were filled with the Holy Ghost, when they spake." And it was He that spake by them. Thus "all Scripture was given by inspiration of God." For "the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." And therefore whatsoever they spake as Prophets, is expressly said to be spoken by the Holy Ghost: David "said by the Holy Ghost," saith our Lord. "Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the Prophet," saith St. Paul. Yea, the very "types" and ceremonies of the Mosaic Law, were all ordained by the Holy Ghost; as we learn from the Apostle, where speaking of the High Priest's going once every year alone into the second tabernacle, he saith, that "the Holy Ghost thereby signified, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest." From whence we may see, by the way, how grossly they are mistaken that imagine, and have had the confidence to assert, that Moses borrowed his rites and ceremonies from Egypt or Babylon, notwithstanding it is so plain from hence, that they came from Heaven, being ordained by the Holy Ghost Himself. And as the Prophets under the Law, so under the Gospel the Evangelists and Apostles never said, or did, or wrote any thing as such, but by the motion and direction of the Holy Ghost; as we find all along in the New Testament.

Numb. 24. 2; Ezek. 2. 2; Luke 1. 41. 67; 2. 25, 26. 2 Sam. 23. 2. 2 Tim. 3. 16. 2 Pet. 1. 21. Mark 12. 36. Acts 28. 25; cf. 1. 16; Heb. 3. 7; 10. 15. Heb. 9. 8.

Now this "Holy Spirit" by which the Prophets and Apostles were acted, is expressly said to be "the Spirit of Christ," and that too by his own direction in St. Peter, saying, "Of which Salvation the Prophets have inquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify." The same thing appears also in the Prophets themselves; for they speaking as they were moved by "the Spirit of Christ," Christ Himself often speaks in them of Himself, as one with that "Spirit" by which they spake; as where He saith, "They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." "They pierced My hands and My feet."

1 Pet. 1. 10, 11. Ps. 22. 18. Ver. 16.

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"They shall look upon Me whom they have pierced." "Thou wilt not leave My soul in Hell." There are many such places in the Prophets, where Christ Himself speaks of Himself in His own Person, to convince us that it was by "His Spirit" they spake, and that it was He they meant when they said, "Thus saith the Lord." And hence also it was, that Christ promised His Apostles, that He would "send the Holy Spirit" unto them, to let them know it was by His Spirit they should be acted and directed in preaching and propagating His Gospel. So that all the revelations that Almighty God hath given us of Himself, and His holy will, they all came by His "Holy Spirit," as He is in a peculiar manner the "Spirit" of Christ, the great Prophet of the world.

Zech. 12. 10. Ps. 16. 10. John 15. 26; 16. 7.

4. As God our Saviour hath thus revealed His will to mankind by His "Holy Spirit," so by the "same Spirit" He enables them both to know and do His said will, which otherwise they would not; for though the words (at least the original) whereby He hath signified His mind to us, what He would have us believe and do, be ever so clear and plain, yet the things themselves signified by those words, are some of them so much above us, and others so contrary to our corrupt nature, that we cannot of ourselves receive or apprehend any of them aright. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." As sensible things can be discerned only by our senses, and rational by reason only; so spiritual things, such as are revealed by the Spirit of God, can be discerned only by the same Spirit that revealed them; without which we can discern no more of them, than we can the proper objects of our reason, without the use of our reason, or such as are sensible without our senses. Hence it is, that men of parts and learning, and great capacities in other things; yet, notwithstanding, are often incapable of such things as are purely of "Divine revelation;" they cannot get it into their heads how such things should be, and therefore oppose them, and argue with all their might against them as if they were impossible, or at least improbable, because not agreeable to the ideas, as they are pleased to

1 Cor. 2. 14.

call them, or notions which they have of other things: when, after all, the only reason why they cannot apprehend so far, at least, as to believe such things as are revealed by the "Spirit of God," is, because they are "not taught of God," nor endued and assisted by the same Spirit by which they are revealed. [John 6. 45.]

But it is quite otherwise with those who are acted and influenced by the Spirit of Christ. By Him their minds are so enlightened, that they see into the truth of all that is revealed by Him, more clearly than other people can the most obvious things that lie before them: by Him they are taught so effectually, as to "know all things" that are necessary for them to know. By Him they are kept from all damnable errors, and "led into all truth," so as to receive it in the love of it. By Him they are as fully assured of the great mysteries of the Christian religion, as any philosopher can be, of the most undeniable point in mathematics: by Him, moving upon their souls, and reducing them into a right frame and temper, they are regenerated, sanctified, and renewed in the spirit of their minds, so as clearly to discern the vast difference between good and evil, between what God hath commanded, and what He hath forbidden, and therefore cannot but of their own accord choose the one and refuse the other; their thoughts, their understandings, their judgments, their affections are all so renewed, as not only to see, but feel and relish all those Divine truths and laws which are revealed in the Holy Scriptures, by the same Spirit by which they are so renewed. These are they which are here said to "have the Spirit of Christ," and therefore belong to Him. John 14. 26; 1John 2. 20. 27. John 16. 13.

But "if any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His." If a man be not thus acted and sanctified by "the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His;" he is not in the number of those whom Christ looks upon as His own proper and peculiar people, so as to take particular care of them, and intercede continually in Heaven for them, that they may be preserved from all evil here, and live with Him for ever hereafter.

That we may understand this aright, we must know, that although it be certain that Christ died for all men, so that

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all men are capable of being saved by Him, yet it is as certain also, that all men shall not be saved by Him; and that none shall be so, but only such as believe in Him, and so apply the merits of His death to themselves, for their pardon and justification before God: but this the greatest part of mankind will not do; I speak not only of Jews, Turks, and other infidels, but they also who profess to believe in Him, generally do no more than profess it: there are but few that really do it; but few that believe in Him, as He requires in His Holy Gospel, with such a faith that purifies their hearts, and unites them to Him, so as to make them sound members of that body of which He is the Head; yet these are the only persons whom Christ reckons His own; none else have any part or portion in Him, nor He in them, no more than as if He had never died for them: and therefore He leaves all such to the wide world, to the general providence of God, to shift for themselves as well as they can: and howsoever they may seem to live in this world, they can never be truly happy, neither in this nor the next. But as for such who constantly live with a quick and lively faith in Him, as their only Lord and Saviour, and always behave themselves accordingly, Christ looks upon them as His own, His "inheritance," His "lot," His "peculiar people," His "elect," His "friends," His "treasure," His "sheep," His "flock," His "disciples" indeed, His "brethren," yea, His very "members," according to their respective places and stations in His body the Church; as we find all along in His Holy Scriptures: these He hath a special kindness for, and is now appearing in the presence of God, making atonement and reconciliation for them. These considered together, are properly the household of God, the Communion of Saints, His domestic servants, who make it their constant business to serve Him, and so continue always in His love and favour:

John 17. 9. He "prays for these," He "prays not for the world, but for these which God hath given Him out of the world." These, all and every one, go to God by Him, and therefore He is

Heb. 7. 25. always interceding for them, that they may want nothing that is good, nothing that is needful, to their obtaining eternal Salvation by Him.

Now, how happy must they needs be, who have such a

powerful Mediator and Advocate always at the right hand of God? But who are they, who are thus happy? They who have the Spirit of Christ, and none else, no not one; for the Apostle here speaks in the singular number, saying, "If any man," whatsoever he be, if he "have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His;" whereby he plainly shews, that no one man in the world, whatsoever his condition be, belongs to Christ, so as to be saved by Him, unless he "have the Spirit of Christ."

And the reason is plain, for it is only by "His Spirit" that any man can be made His. It is impossible, that we who are so infinitely below Him, could be so nearly related to Him, as to be His, in such an high manner as this phrase imports, any other way than by His own Spirit: but by that we are incorporated into Him, and made members of His Body; for "by one Spirit are we all baptized into one Body," even the Body of Christ. By which means, as all the members of a natural body, being informed by the same soul that is in the head, and from thence is diffused into them, do therefore properly belong to that head; so we are therefore only the members of Christ, and belong to Him, because the same Spirit that is in Him is likewise in us, and moves, animates, and influences us in all the actions of the new and spiritual life. Hence it is, that as many as are led by the Spirit of God, are the sons of God, for having the same Spirit, that is, his only-begotten Son, they, according to their capacities, thereby stand in the same relation to God, as He doth: they are properly His sons also. Insomuch that Christ Himself "is not ashamed to call them brethren."

1 Cor. 12. 13.

Rom. 8. 14.

Heb. 2. 11.

And the reason which the Apostle there gives for it, is, because "He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified, are all of one:" both He and they have one and the same Spirit, and therefore must needs be the children of one and the same Father; and by this it is that we know we are so: For if "we have received the Spirit of adoption, we thereby cry, Abba, Father; the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God."

Rom. 8. 15, 16.

Hence it is also, that St. John saith, "Hereby we know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us."

1 John 3. 24.

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"And hereby know we, that we dwell in Him, and He in us,
1 John 4. 13. because He hath given us of His Spirit." For if He hath
1 Cor. 6. 19. given us "His Spirit," our bodies are thereby made "the temples of the Holy Ghost." And when the Holy Ghost hath taken possession of us, and continues to dwell in us, we are no longer our own, but His, whose Spirit the Holy Ghost
Rom. 8. 17. Heb. 1. 2. is; "And joint-heirs with Him," "who is heir of all things."
2 Cor. 1. 22; 5. 5. Eph. 1. 14. We may be sure of it, in that "He hath given us the earnest of the Spirit." "Which is the earnest of the inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." And this earnest of the Spirit, is so certain and infallible a sign of our right and title to the said inheritance, that we are
Eph. 4. 30. said to be "sealed" by it "to the day of redemption." For by giving us His Holy Spirit, Christ sets, as it were, His seal upon us, and so marks us out for His own, and distinguisheth us from the rest of the world. It is by this that the sheep shall be known from the goats, the heirs of Heaven from the children of disobedience, at the last day; and then it will appear to all the world, that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His."

And if so, how much doth it concern us all to have the Spirit of Christ! Infinitely more than any thing else in the world besides: For seeing Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of mankind; seeing He saves none but such as belong to Him, so as to be properly His: and seeing none are His, but only they who have His Spirit: unless we have His Spirit we shall be lost and undone for ever; and therefore as we tender our own welfare, we must make our chief care and study to get the Spirit of Christ: whatsoever we get besides will signify nothing to us at the last day, unless it be to torment and vex us. But if we have the Spirit of Christ, we shall then have all things we can desire, for then we shall be found in the number of His sheep, and accordingly shall be placed on His right hand, and hear Him pronounce
Matt. 25. 34. that blessed sentence upon us, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

But the great question is, how a man may have the Spirit of Christ? Or what he must do to get and keep it? To that I answer, that Christ having assumed the common

nature of all men, all men are doubtless capable of His Spirit, but none actually receive it, but such only as are united to Him and made members of His body; they partake of His Spirit, as the members of a man's natural body do of that which is in the head; but none else can have it.

Now, in order to our being thus united to Christ, as to have "His Spirit," it is first necessary that we believe in Him: "He that believeth on Me," saith Christ, "as the Scripture saith, Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. This spake He," saith the Evangelist, "of the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive." And His Apostle, speaking of Him to the Ephesians, saith, "In whom, after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." From whence it appears, that no man can have the "Spirit of Christ" until he believes in Christ, whose "Spirit it is," but that all who believe in Him have it effectually conferred upon them.

John 7. 38, 39.

Eph. 1. 13.

But, for that purpose, he who believes in Christ must be baptized into Him; that being the Sacrament appointed by Himself, whereby we testify our belief in Him, and the usual means whereby He gives "His Spirit" to us, and so makes us His own: For Baptism is "the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." We are thereby "born of water and of the Spirit." Water is the sign, the Holy Ghost the thing signified, whereby we "are born again and made the children of God;" because we are, by that means, inserted into the body of his Son Jesus Christ; as appears from the very words of institution, which, according to the original, run thus, "Go ye, therefore, and make all nations disciples, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." For seeing we are made His disciples by being thus "baptized" according to His institution, we are thereby admitted to be members of His Body, and then of course partake of His Holy Spirit.

Tit. 3. 5.

John 3. 5.

Matt. 28. 19.

From whence we may see, by the way, the great necessity of this Sacrament, where it may be had, and what a desperate condition they are in who live in the contempt or neglect of it, as many do in this corrupt age; and perhaps some here present at this time. But I heartily wish, that all such

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would seriously consider, that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour of the world; that He saves none but those who are of His own Body, the Church, and so properly His; that none can be made His, but by being baptized according to His appointment; and, therefore, that all such as wilfully neglect or refuse this Holy Sacrament, and so live and die without it, are none of Christ's flock, and have no more ground to expect ever to be saved by Him than other infidels and heathens have, nor indeed so much; forasmuch as the others know not that Christ ever ordained this Sacrament for the admission into His Church, and so to a state of Salvation; these know and contemn it. Wherefore, if there be any here who, through the error or negligence of their parents, were not baptized in their infancy; and, through their own default, have not yet had this Sacrament administered to them, I beseech you, as you tender your own Salvation, put it off no longer, but prepare yourselves as soon as possible for it, lest you die without it, and so be found at the last day, not among the sheep of Christ, but among the goats, which will be condemned to the "everlasting fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels."

[Matt. 25. 41.]

And as for you, who are so happy as to be born of "water" and of the "Spirit" of "Christ," and so made His, take heed that you do not lose the Spirit which you then received; as you certainly will if you either renounce the faith into which you were baptized, or live in the constant breach of the vow which you then made; and seeing you cannot but be conscious to yourselves that you have kept neither the faith, nor your promise, so strictly as ye ought, but have many ways offended, and therefore have cause to fear that God hath or will withdraw "His Holy Spirit" from you, you must constantly pray, as David did in the like case, saying, "Cast me not away from Thy presence, O Lord, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me."

Ps. 51. 11.

But there are some, too many I fear, who were once baptized with water and the Spirit, and so made the children of God and heirs of Heaven, but afterwards have proved so undutiful, "disobedient, and to every good work reprobate," that their Heavenly Father hath, in effect, cast them off, disinherited them, and suffers His "Spirit to strive no longer with

[Tit. 1. 16.]

[Gen. 6. 3.]

them." The condition of such is very deplorable, but not altogether desperate; for they having been once admitted into the number of His children, Almighty God hath still so much respect and favour for them, that upon their repentance and return to their duty, He is ready to receive them again, and to give them His Holy Spirit, to assist them in the performance of it, if they do but ask it of Him: we may be sure of it, for we have the word of Christ Himself for it, saying, "If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more will your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?" To them who have been adopted into His family, and made His children, He, as their Heavenly Father, will give the Holy Spirit; but to none else, nor to them neither, unless they ask it too, according to the rules that He Himself hath prescribed for it, heartily, importunately, in faith, in the name of Christ, instantly, and without ceasing. If you thus ask it, He will give you His Holy Spirit, though not immediately, yet in the use of the means which He hath ordained for that end; especially in the faithful performance of your public devotions to Him, when you are met together in His name, to pray jointly to Him for it; to praise His most holy name, and to hear that Word which He hath given by the inspiration of the same Spirit, and receive the holy Sacrament; Christ Himself is always in the midst of such assemblies of His Saints, ready to distribute the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit among them. As we often find He did, both in the Old and New Testament, but very rarely, if ever, at any other time or place. And, therefore, as you desire the continual assistance of the Spirit of Christ, you must neglect no opportunity you can get, of waiting upon Him in His own House, and at His own Table, where He usually moves upon those who come rightly disposed for it, and takes them under His own care and conduct.

Luke 11. 13.

Matt. 18. 20.

But then you must take special heed, not to "grieve the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Do nothing that may offend so Divine a guest, lest you provoke Him to withdraw Himself from you; "Quench not the Spirit," stifle not those holy motions He puts into your hearts, "but do all you can to stir them up,"

Eph. 4. 30.

1 Thess. 5. 19.

2 Tim. 1. 6.

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that ye may be "fervent in spirit," "zealous of good works," "steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know, your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Rom. 12. 11. [Tit. 2. 14.] 1 Cor. 15. 58.

Having thus shewn, that they only who have the Spirit of Christ are truly His, and likewise how ye may all have it, if ye will but seek it as ye ought, there will be no occasion, I hope, of persuading you to endeavour after it all ye can; I shall only desire you to consider, that unless you have the "Spirit of Christ, you are still in the flesh," that is, in your natural or carnal estate, no better than when ye came into the world, or rather much worse; and so long as such, you can never please God, nor do any one thing acceptable in His sight: you are enemies to God, and He is an enemy to you; you have nothing that you can truly call a blessing, for every thing you have is cursed to you; you have no interest in the merits of Christ's death, nor in the intercession that He makes at the right hand of God: for you are without Christ, "Aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise; having no hope, and without God in the world." Ye are in continual danger of being condemned to hell-fire, and will certainly be so when ye die, unless ye repent and believe, so as to have the Spirit of Christ while ye live.

Ver. 8.

Eph. 2. 12.

Whereas, if you have the Spirit of Christ, and so are His, what an happy condition will ye then be in! Ye will then be free from that bondage of corruption to which others are subject, for "where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Ye will then, "through the Spirit, mortify the deeds of the body," and live continually in "newness of life." Ye will then bring forth the "fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance," and whatsoever else can adorn either your hearts or lives, and make you amiable in the sight of God. Ye will then partake of the Divine Nature, and be holy, as He who hath called you is "holy in all manner of conversation:" ye will then have Jesus Christ, whose ye are, always making intercession for you, and washing you from your sins in His own blood: ye will then be safe and secure under the protection of the Almighty,

2 Cor. 3. 17. Rom. 8. 13. [Rom. 6. 4.] Gal. 5. 22, 23. [1 Pet. 1. 15.]

and need not fear any evil that can happen to you: ye will then live under the light of God's countenance, and have it shining continually upon you, cheering and refreshing your spirits, more than ye can imagine. Ye have already the earnest of the inheritance, and therefore need not doubt, but that, ere long, you will be possessed of it, "an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for you." And all because ye have the Spirit of Christ, and so are His, whose all things are: "To whom with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be all honour and glory now and for ever." Amen.

1 Pet. 1. 4.

SERMON XXIV.

THE OBLIGATIONS OF SUPERIORS TO PROMOTE RELIGION.

Psalm ii. 11.

Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.

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Although these words were spoken by David, king of Israel, yet they were not his words, but the word of God Himself; as the same royal Prophet saith, in his last prophetical words, "The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and His Word was in my tongue." So it was in his composing and uttering this Psalm; he did it not out of his own head, but as he "was moved by the Holy Ghost:" so that it was God Himself that spake it by him. This we cannot doubt of, having it so plainly attested from Heaven; for when St. Peter and St. John had told the rest of the Apostles and disciples how they had been threatened by the rulers of the Jews, for preaching the Gospel of Christ, "they lift up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, Thou art God which hast made Heaven and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of Thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. For of a truth, against Thy holy child Jesus, whom Thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together," &c. And they had no sooner said this, and prayed for grace to preach the Word with boldness, but immediately the "place was shaken where they were

2 Sam. 23. 2.

[2 Pet. 1. 21.]

Acts 4. 24-27.

Ver. 31.

assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness." The shaking of the house, and the coming of the Holy Ghost upon them at that time, being wholly out of the ordinary course of nature, could not have happened but by the immediate hand of God; who therefore did, by this means, set, as it were, His seal, for the confirmation of all that His Apostles had then said. But they had said, what He Himself had said by the mouth of His servant David, "Why do the heathen rage," &c. Which being the very words wherewith this Psalm begins, God did thereby own Himself to be the author of it, and affirmed it by a miracle; which is more, I think, than can be said of any other particular place of Scripture, after the whole had been so confirmed.

Neither did He, in this extraordinary manner, signify His approbation only of what they had then said concerning this Psalm in general, but likewise of what they added for the explication of it: even that "His Holy Child Jesus," whom He had anointed, was the Messiah or Christ here spoken of; and that the whole Psalm is therefore to be understood of Him, and of Him only: that it was He against whom the people raged; that He is that Lord, who, sitting in Heaven, "will have them in derision, and vex them in His sore displeasure" for it. That it is He of whom God the Father saith, "Yet have I set My King," a King of Mine own anointing, "upon My holy Hill of Sion," (where the ark then was, and He sat between the cherubims over the mercy-seat that was upon it:) and that it was He who said, "I will declare the decree, the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee. Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession: Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

Ver. 1-5.

Ver. 6.

Ver. 7-9.

The Spirit of Christ being in "all the Prophets," particularly in this, Christ often speaks of Himself in the first person so plainly, that it cannot possibly be understood of any other: as where He saith, "Thou wilt not leave My soul in hell." "They pierced My hands and My feet."

1 Pet. 1. 11.

Ps. 16. 10.

Ps. 22. 16.

SERM. XXIV. Ver. 18.

"They part My garments among them, and cast lots upon My vesture." So here He saith, "I will declare the decree, The Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee." Whereby He hath declared to the world his Eternal Godhead. That He was from all eternity begotten of Jehovah the Father, and therefore must needs be of the same Divine nature with Him, the same Jehovah; it being impossible there should be any more than one Jehovah, according to His own saying, "I and My Father are one." This He declares in the first place, as being the foundation of that religion that He hath revealed to the world, and of all our hopes of salvation in it. And therefore also in the New Testament this declaration is frequently quoted, always applied to Christ, and great use is made of it, for the confirming of his religion, *Heb.* i. 5; v. 5, and *Acts* xiii. 33, where it is expressly said to be written in the "second Psalm:" which is another undeniable argument, that this Psalm is to be understood wholly of Christ Jesus.

Deut. 6. 4. John 10. 30.

Having thus declared His eternal generation, as He was God, He then sets forth the great power that is given Him, as He is the "King" before spoken of, set upon "Sion," as He is the Head of the Church, the Saviour of the world, the Mediator between God and men; for it is only as He is such, that any thing can be given Him which He had not before: but as He had undertaken to be born of the seed of the woman, and was so in the decree and promise of God from the beginning of the world, and was therefore anointed to be a Prophet, a Priest, and a King too, that He might be able to destroy the works of the Devil, and to save mankind; in this respect He there declares, that the Lord hath also said unto Him, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the utmost parts of the earth for Thy possession." Though He was then set upon "the Holy Hill of Sion" (which was therefore "holy" because He kept His residence there) yet His dominion was to be "from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," so that "all kings shall fall down before Him, all nations shall serve Him." King David himself calls Him "his Lord," and "the Lord of the whole earth." Which title can belong to none but Christ, and to Him only

Psal. 72. 8. Ver. 11. Ps. 110. 1. Ps. 97. 5.

as He is "God-Man," and as such the Saviour of all mankind: for no mere man ever was, or can be "Lord of the whole earth." God, as such, is the Lord, not only of the earth, but of the whole world. But Christ, as He is the Son of Man, as well as the Son of God, hath the "whole earth" in His own possession, and all the nations and people in it, subject to His dominion and power. This is here said to be given Him by Jehovah, the "Lord of Heaven and earth:" and it is given Him on purpose that He may save all that believe in Him, and serve Him, in whatsoever part of the earth they live. Thus He Himself explains this gift of the Father to Him, saying unto Him, "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee: As Thou hast given Him power over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou hast given Him." Hence it is that He commanded His Apostles to go "and make all nations His disciples, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," that so all nations, and all the people in them, both old and young, might "be brought into subjection to Him, and become His inheritance," as it is here promised. And accordingly at the very time that He ascended up to Heaven, He promised His Apostles, that they should receive power from Him to preach His Gospel, and so "be witnesses to Him, not only in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, but unto the uttermost parts of the earth," and that He Himself would be with them and their successors in doing it, "to the end of the world." By which means many "of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues" upon earth, are advanced to Heaven, by His Almighty Power, who reigns and rules over the "whole earth." But for that purpose He asketh it of the Father, who said to Him, "Ask of Me, and I will give Thee," &c. that is, He prays or intercedes for "all that come unto God by Him," wheresoever they live, and therefore is "able to save them all to the uttermost," how many soever they be, and will accordingly do it.

John 17. 1, 2.

Matt. 28. 19.

Acts 1. 8.

Matt. 28. 20. Rev. 7. 9.

Heb. 7. 25.

Such a Mighty Prince is the Lord Jesus, "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords," presiding over all the empires and kingdoms upon earth,

1 Tim. 6. 15.

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and ordering all things in them, so as may conduce to His glory, and to the salvation of all that take His yoke upon them, believe in Him, and keep His laws; and that nothing may be able to impede His saving of them, He hath all power given Him, not only upon earth, but in Heaven too. For God hath now "set Him at His own right hand, far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is His Body." So that He is now Lord paramount over the whole creation, and all for the sake of His Church, or the congregation of faithful people dispersed over the face of the earth, that He may bring them at last to reign with Him in Heaven. But as for such as will not believe in Him, but rebel against Him, and refuse to submit to His laws and government, "He will break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel," as many have found already by woeful experience, and all shall do so at the last day; when He shall come again, and manifest His supreme authority over the "whole earth," by judging all mankind that ever did, or ever shall live upon the face of it.

Matt. 28. 18.
Eph. 1. 20. 23.
Ps. 2. 9.

Now God our Saviour having thus asserted His Divine glory and power, in the former part of this Psalm, all the rest of it is only a conclusion that naturally follows upon these premises; for these things being considered, the Holy Spirit in David infers, "Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth;" that is, learn from hence and beware, that you set yourselves no more against the Lord, and against His Christ; but "serve the Lord," this mighty Lord, "serve Him with fear," dreading the thoughts of ever falling under His displeasure; and "rejoice with trembling," rejoice that ye have such an Almighty King and Saviour; but do it with fear and reverence of His Divine Majesty and Power. "Kiss the Son." Adore this the Eternal Son of God, the Lord of the whole earth, lest He "be angry" with you, for not paying the homage which you owe Him, and so you "perish" in the way, in the way you are going to the other world, and be

Ver. 10.
1 Kings 19. 18.

there " punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power," as you most certainly will, if His anger " be kindled," yea, " but a little" against you. But blessed, thrice " blessed are all they that put their trust" and believe " in Him." He will " pray" for them, though not for the rest of the world, and so will take them into His own Almighty protection; make " all things work together for their good," while they are upon earth, and then bring them to Himself in Heaven, where they shall " behold His glory, and enjoy Him for ever." 2 Thess. 1. 9. [Rom. 8. 28.]

It was necessary thus to run through this whole Psalm, the better to clear the way to that part of it which I design, God willing, to insist more particularly upon, even, " Serve the Lord with fear;" which otherwise might not have been so well understood, whereas now it is plain and easy. For seeing that Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, is spoken of, as I have shewn, in the former part of this Psalm, and His dominion is there asserted over all the earth, the conclusion drawn from these premises must be understood of the same person. And therefore by the Lord, whom " kings and judges are" here commanded " to serve," we must understand the Lord Christ, the Son, as He is here also expressly called, even the Eternal Son of God the Father. Not that the Father also is not to be served, but because, as the Son Himself saith, " The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son; that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father." This was the great end wherefore the Father hath committed so great authority over all the earth to the Son, that all mankind should serve and honour Him, in all respects, as they do or ought to honour and serve the Father: for they are both one Jehovah, one God; and therefore whatsoever is done to the one, is done to the other; " He that believeth on Me," saith the Son, " believeth not on Me, but on Him that sent Me. And he that seeth Me, seeth Him that sent Me." " He that hateth Me, hateth my Father also." So he " that serveth the Son, serveth the Father also. For the Son is in the Father, and the Father in the Son." And therefore it is impossible John 5. 22, 23. John 12. 44, 45. Chap. 15. 23. Chap. 14. 20.

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to serve the one without the other. But whosoever serves the Son, doth, *ipso facto*, serve the Father, that is "in Him," and "one" with "Him."

And besides, no man can serve the Father but by the Son, nor by Him neither, without serving of Him: As He Him-
John 5. 23. self again saith, "He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which hath sent Him." For the Father accepts of no honour from men, but what comes to Him through His Son, the only Mediator between Him and them. How piously, how virtuously soever they may seem to live, and whatsoever honour and worship they pretend to give to God, nothing they do is acceptable to Him any other way,
1 Pet. 2. 5. than by "Jesus Christ." Neither can any man so much
John 14. 6. as "come unto the Father, but by Him." And, therefore, they who do not first come unto the Son, believe in Him, and serve Him, can never be the servants of God, nor do any one thing that is pleasing in His sight. Whereas they who truly and faithfully "serve" the Son of God, are so high in the favour and esteem of God the Father, that He hath a particular respect, yea, an "honour for them." I should not have ventured upon so high an expression, but that I
John 12. 26. have the warrant of Christ Himself for it, saying, "If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour."

This, therefore, is the Lord, the Lord God Omnipotent, whom the "kings and judges" of the earth "are" here commanded "to serve." Not like David, though he was a sovereign prince in his own country, he had no power over any other, much less over all the kings and judges of the earth, so as to require them to "be wise," and "to instruct" them what to do, and whom to serve: and therefore this, and all such places in the Holy Scriptures, where commands are laid upon all the kings and nations upon earth, most evidently shew their Divine authority; that they are not of any private interpretation, or human invention, but were given by the inspiration of "God, the King of Kings," the
Prov. 8. 15, 16. Lord of the whole earth, by whom "kings reign, and princes decree justice," by whom "princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." They are all but His deputies or vicegerents in their respective kingdoms and provinces, His ministers, to execute His laws and judgments.

And, therefore, when some of them had conspired and set themselves against the Lord, and against His "Christ;" He, by His Holy Spirit, issued forth this His Divine proclamation, wherein, having first acquainted them with that Supreme authority, which He had given to His Son Christ over all the earth, He lays this strict command upon all sovereign princes, and their under-officers in all parts of the earth: "Be wise now therefore, O ye kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling."

He, in many other places of His Holy Oracles, hath required all people to "serve Him," but here He commands "kings" and "judges," as such, to do it; not only in their private capacities, as they also are men, but likewise as they are "kings" that govern whole empires or countries, and make laws to be observed by all that live within their several dominions; and as "judges" or subordinate officers, impowered and commissioned by their respective "kings" to see their said laws put in execution. It is in this their public capacity, that the Universal Monarch of the World speaks to them in this place, and commands them all to "serve Him," that so their people may do it, not only every one by himself, but all together as they are a nation, or kingdom, a society of men united together under one common head. As we read in the Prophet Daniel, that to the Son of Man was given, "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve Him." So it ought to be all the earth over: and so it will be, when He sees good to ask it of the Father: but when that will be, it is in vain for us to inquire, seeing it is not revealed to us. Dan. 7. 14.

It is sufficient for us to know, that many kingdoms upon earth have already professed their subjection to Him, and that all are bound to "serve Him;" for this command being laid upon kings, as such, it doth not affect their persons only, but their kingdoms, and reacheth all that are advised with, or any way concerned in their government, or in devising laws for the better administration of it. They are all obliged by this, and many other Divine commands, to "serve Him" in it; who, by His overruling Providence, puts them into such a public station, for that end and pur-

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pose, that they may be able to do it. But what it is properly to "serve the Lord," and how all such both may and ought to do it, are questions that deserve our most serious inquiry; and therefore I shall endeavour to search into the bottom of them, and lay them as open as I can in few terms.

What it is properly to "serve the Lord," may well be made a question; forasmuch as at first sight it may seem to be impossible: for who can "serve Him" that lacks nothing? What can men do for Him, who is neither better nor worse for any thing which they do? It is true, He being infinitely glorious in Himself, cannot possibly receive any accessions of glory from any other, much less from His own creatures, who have nothing but what they receive from Him; and therefore He cannot be said to be served by them, in that sense wherein they are said to serve one another. But He is pleased to look upon them as "serving Him," when they own or acknowledge His Divine glory and authority over them, and shew they do so, by all such means and methods as He, for that purpose, hath prescribed to them: for He having made, and still governing all things for Himself, even for the manifestation of His own glory, such of His creatures as reflect upon it, admire it, and manifest they do so in all their actions, and strive what they can that others should do it too; they carry on the same design that He doth in the world, and are therefore said to "serve Him" in that they are subservient to Him in setting forth His honour and glory. Thus all the creatures that He hath made capable of it, as angels and men, are bound to "serve" their Creator; and unless they do it, they do not answer the end of their creation, but live to no purpose in the world.

Now, as in the creation and government of the world by His Word, God hath, and still doth manifest the glory of His wisdom, and power, and goodness; so in the redemption of fallen man by His Son, or Word incarnate, He discovered the glory of His grace and truth, which otherwise, as far as we know, would never have appeared in the world; for

John 1. 17. "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." It is in Him only that God hath promised grace or mercy to mankind; and it is in Him only that His truth appears in His fulfil-

ling of the said promises; and therefore He is said to be "glorified in His saints, and admired in all them that believe." Because they give Him the glory of these Divine perfections, and so truly "serve Him," which other people do not. 2 Thess. 1. 10.

Wherefore, by "serving Jehovah" the Lord, we are here to understand the setting forth and promoting His honour and glory, as He is the Redeemer of mankind, as well as the Creator and Governor of the world: when men do not only believe all that is recorded, as done and said by Him in His holy Word, worship and obey Him themselves, and trust wholly on Him for all things necessary to their eternal salvation; but likewise do what they can that His "name may be glorified," His Gospel propagated, His Church and kingdom upon earth defended and enlarged, His doctrine received, His laws obeyed, His praises celebrated, His servants encouraged, and His supreme authority and dominion owned, admired, and feared by all, "that every tongue may confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." They who in their several places, and according to their several abilities, contribute any thing towards these great ends, and do it heartily, as to the Lord, they truly "serve the Lord Christ," as St. Paul saith the Colossians did, and shall accordingly "receive the reward of the inheritance from Him." 2 Thess. 1. 12. Phil. 2. 11. Col. 3. 24.

From hence it is easy to gather, how any man, in his place and station, may some way or other "serve the Lord:" but this command being here laid upon the "kings," and "judges of the earth," such as make, and such as execute the laws in every kingdom; I shall take occasion from hence to shew more particularly, how He may and ought to be "served" by the laws of any kingdom; and by all such as are either consulted with in the making, or entrusted with the administration of them; and, by consequence, how whole kingdoms also may "serve the Lord." Ps. 102. 22.

This, I confess, may seem a bold attempt in a private person; but I look not upon myself, in this place, as in a private capacity, but as a public minister, or, as the Apostle expresseth it, "an Ambassador for Christ;" for Christ, the Sovereign of the world. It is in His name only I speak, 2 Cor. 5. 20.

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and shall take care to follow the instructions that He hath given in His Holy Word, not doubting but many will be as glad to hear how they "may serve the Lord" in such a public station, as I can be to put them in mind of it, according to my bounden duty to our common Lord and Master.

But to set this in such a light that we may all take a full view of it, it will be necessary to prepare the way, by laying down a few general propositions.

1. Almighty God, here called the Lord, as He is the Maker and Governor, so He is the Supreme Lawgiver of the world.

James 4. 12.

"There is one Lawgiver," saith St. James, "who is able to save and to destroy." Who that is, we may learn from

Isa. 33. 22.

the Prophet, saying, "The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Lawgiver, the Lord is our King, He will save us." The same Lord that is our Judge, our King, and our Saviour, He likewise is our Lawgiver, or, as the word may be rendered, the maker of our laws or statutes, which He makes only by signifying His will what He would have done; His word being a law to all things that He hath made.

2. This universal Lawgiver of the world, as He hath given laws to all things else suitable to their respective natures, and the ends for which He made them, so He hath given laws to all mankind, as they are reasonable and free agents, and so capable of reflecting upon them, and of observing them upon choice. These "laws" He first wrote upon the "tables" of man's "heart;" when they were defaced there, He published them upon Mount Sinai; then transcribed them with His own finger upon two "tables" of "stone;" after that, He explained them by His Prophets; and at last with His own mouth, when He was upon earth, adding some new ones, to shew that all the other likewise were given by Him.

3. All the laws that God hath made for mankind to observe, are recorded in Holy Scripture given by His inspiration, as appears also from the very laws which are there recorded; for who can give laws to all kings, such as that in my text, but He that is the "King of kings?" Who can give laws to all the people and nations upon earth, but He that is the Lord of the whole earth? Who can give laws to the very hearts of men, to their thoughts, and the

secret motions of the will, that never break forth into act, but only He who is the only Searcher of hearts? Who could threaten Hell and damnation to those who break His laws, but He who can "destroy both soul and body in Hell?" [Matt. 10. 28.] Who could promise eternal life and happiness to such as keep His laws, but He in whose power alone it is to give it? So clearly doth the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures shine forth in the very laws which are there recorded, that he who doth not wilfully shut his eyes cannot but see it.

4. As the Supreme Governor of the world hath thus given laws for all mankind to observe, in their behaviour both to Him and one another, that every one may govern himself, and order all his affairs and actions according to the will of Him that made and preserveth him; so He hath given power to every kingdom or nation to make by-laws for the security and government of itself, and all the members of it, as such. He Himself made such for the Children of Israel, when He was, in a special manner, their "King," having chosen them, out of all other nations, to be His own peculiar people; for that they were nearer of kin than other people to the flesh He designed to take upon Him. Besides the "moral laws" which He gave to mankind in general, He made several judgments, as they are called, or "judicial laws," for this His own people, for the better keeping up of the civil polity or government among themselves, and for the better administration of His moral laws, to all that lived in that community. But these laws being made only for that nation, and for that only, so long as they continued a distinct nation of themselves, they ceased in course at the dissolution of their government; and it is not necessary they should be received or observed in any other nation, as our [Art. vii.] Church hath wisely declared.

5. Although God hath given this power to all kingdoms and nations to make "laws" for the better support and government of themselves, yet He hath not given them leave to repeal any of His "own laws," nor to enact any thing contrary to them. It is usual for a prince, when he grants a charter to a city or corporation within his dominions, to give power therein to make by-laws, for the management of the affairs of that community, provided they

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be no way repugnant to his own or the common laws of his kingdom: if they be, they are null from the beginning. And so are they which are made in any particular kingdom, if they be in the least contrary to any of the common laws of the world, those which the "King of kings" hath made for all mankind, both kings and people to observe. In that [Acts5.29.] case, the general law is, that "we must obey God rather than man:" so that people are so far from being obliged to observe such laws, that they are obliged not to observe them. And all such laws, though they may perhaps, upon some mistake, be made to a good end, yet being evil in themselves, no good can ever come of them; and they who make them, expose themselves and their country also to the displeasure of God, who will, be sure, vindicate the honour of "His own laws," and punish the contempt that is thrown upon them, if not presently, at least, one time or other.

6. But when such laws are made in any country, by those to whom the foresaid power is committed, which are agreeable, or no way repugnant to the laws of God, all that live under that government are bound to observe such laws, in obedience to the laws of God Himself, who commanded Rom. 13. 1. "every soul to be subject to the higher powers" under which Ver. 5. he lives, and to be "subject not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake," not only for fear of the punishment, which may be inflicted for breach of the law, but for fear of God, 1 Pet. 2. 13. who hath commanded him to keep it, and to "submit himself to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake;" for His sake, or in obedience to Him, who hath given this power to kings and governors, to make such laws for the defence, security, and benefit of the government, without which it could not so well subsist, nor the people that live under it serve God in peace and quietness. Neither is it possible for subjects to observe those commands of God, whereby He requires their obedience to the powers which He hath set over them, but only in such things as He Himself hath not determined, but hath left the determination of them to His deputies or ministers in every country, according as the necessities of time and place may require: and therefore when He Himself was upon earth, in the likeness and nature of man, being, as such, but a subject, He would not

take upon Him, when desired, to decide a controversy between two brethren that contended about their inheritance, but left them to the law of the land, saying, "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" Though He was then also the Judge and Divider over all mankind, yet having given power to the magistrates of the country, to make laws and appoint judges for the decision of such controversies betwixt man and man, He would not recall His power upon such a particular occasion, but referred the cause wholly to the laws which were made by it, and caused it to be left upon record, that all people may know that it is His Will, that they should submit to the laws of the land where they live, and stand by them in all things wherein they do not contradict His own. Luke 12. 14.

I shall premise only one thing more, which is, that although sovereign princes and emperors have this power of making laws committed to them, yet they seldom or never exercise it, without consulting some or other of their subjects, which are supposed to understand the state of the kingdom, the temper and circumstances of the people, and what occasion there is for having any new laws imposed upon them; and therefore they who are so consulted, are accountable to God for what laws they advise, as well as their sovereign is for making them: especially in such empires or kingdoms, as we have several in this part of the world, which are so constituted either originally, or by the favour of their princes, that the sovereign never signs or makes any new law, till such a number of his subjects, or all met together by their representatives, have considered of the matter, and upon mature deliberation agree, advise and desire it may be passed into a law. In this case, all who are called together for such a purpose, ought to have the same care of what laws are made, as if they themselves were to make them; for though they are not made by them, yet they would not be made without them: and therefore they also are under the obligation which is here laid upon kings, to "serve the Lord" in it.

And how they may do it, may be easily seen from the premises thus laid down; for from hence we may first observe, that they who have such an opportunity put into

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their hands, of "serving" God in so high a capacity, should make it their chief end and design to "serve Him" in it; for this is one of these common laws, which the Almighty Governor of the world hath made, for all mankind to observe in all the actions of their life; even to make His glory the ultimate end of every one of them. "Whether ye eat or drink," saith He by His Apostle, "or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." And again, "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus," and so for "His service" and honour. And if this should be the end of every man's actions, much more of such as govern a whole kingdom or empire. I know all that are consulted in such public affairs, ought to "serve" their king and their country too: but that they can never do, unless they first "serve Him," upon whose good will and pleasure, the welfare of all the kings and kingdoms upon earth depends. Neither can they be truly said to "serve Him," unless they design to do so: although they may, perhaps, do something which He may make for His service, by ordering it so, as that it shall turn to His glory; yet they cannot be said to "serve" Him in it, unless they design it; and design it too before all things else, so as to make His glory their first and chief end: otherwise they are so far from "serving," that they dishonour Him, by preferring something else before Him; whereas, they who make His honour the ultimate end of what they do, thereby shew, that they own Him to be the chiefest good, the first cause, and the supreme Disposer of all things; which is itself much for His honour, and therefore a great part of that "service" which we owe Him.

1 Cor. 10. 31.

Col. 3. 7.

Now, they who have thus the "service" of God always uppermost in their eye, cannot but use the most effectual means they can think of, that others also may "serve" Him as well as they, in their several vocations and callings; and if they be called to consult about laws to be given to a whole kingdom, they will, in course, contrive and advise, or, at least, agree to such as will most conduce to keep up and promote the "serving" of God, that He may be better known, admired, adored, and worshipped, than otherwise He would be, in the whole kingdom, and all the dominions belonging to it: for the doing of this, is that which they are

here commanded, and which they themselves are therefore supposed to aim at; it is "serving the Lord."

But, for that purpose, they must do what they can, that nothing may pass for a law among men, that is in the least contrary to the law of God: for His laws, as well as His works, are all made for His honour, that men by keeping them, might serve Him; and therefore, so far as any human is repugnant to His Divine laws, so much is detracted from His "service:" and besides that, they who attempt to enact any thing upon earth, that is contrary to what was before enacted in Heaven, fly in the very face of Heaven, and bid defiance to the Sovereign of the whole world; which is the highest affront and dishonour that is possible for His creatures to cast upon Him, and will be accordingly punished one time or other, as they will find to their cost, whether they believe it as yet or no: whereas, they who, in drawing up any human laws, keep as close as it is possible to the laws of God, and make it their great care and study to avoid all appearance of contradicting them, out of an holy fear of displeasing Him, thereby plainly declare, that they agnise or acknowledge His supreme authority over the world, and the wisdom, goodness, justice, and excellency of the laws which He hath made for it, and therefore may be truly said to "serve the Lord with fear," as they are here commanded.

But the laws of God being written originally in languages that are not commonly understood, there have been, and still may be, doubts and questions raised about the true sense and meaning of some of them; and if this should happen, as it sometimes doth, in the compiling or making any human laws, what course must they take who are engaged in it, that they may be sure to keep within the compass of the Divine, and never transgress the bounds which God hath set them? To that it may be answered, that many of the old laws of this, as well as other realms, were at first written in such a language, that few in our days, if any, do fully understand; and many other are so worded, that questions often arise about the interpretation of them: in which case, the law itself hath provided a remedy, by referring it to the judges of the realm, to resolve such doubts, and interpret such laws as are in controversy and

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dispute; and the sense, which they, by virtue of their place and office, give of the law, in such a case, is taken for the law, as much as if there was no dispute about it. So here, when God was graciously pleased to commit His laws to writing, He ordered them to be written in such languages, as were vulgarly understood of those people to whom they were first committed, and from whom they were to be communicated to the rest of the world: and foreseeing that doubts would sometimes arise about the interpretation of them, He inserted it into the body of His laws, how He would have them interpreted, even by such as He should choose into the Priest's office, to minister to Him at His altar, and so have more immediate access to Him than other people had; for so saith the Law, "The lips of the Priest shall keep knowledge, and they shall seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts." Not, they *should* only, as it is in our translation, but "they *shall* seek it at his mouth," as it is in the original, and so it is made a law, commanding all people to do so; and the reason also is given for it, even because the Priest, as such, "is the messenger of the Lord of Hosts." He, as a Priest, speaks not his own sense, but the sense of the lawgiver, as being His messenger; as we read of Caiaphas, that "he spake not of himself, but being High-Priest that year, he prophesied," or declared, that according to the true meaning of the law, "Jesus should die for that nation," &c. And when the Lawgiver Himself was upon earth, He explained and confirmed the same Law with His own mouth, saying to the multitude that was about Him, as well as to His own disciples, "The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses's seat. All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works, for they say and do not." Though in themselves they were generally ill men, and therefore not to be imitated in what they did; yet as they sat in Moses's seat, and so had the power of interpreting the law, all people are here commanded "to observe and do what they said:" and if they happened to give a wrong sense of the Law, they were to bear the blame and punishment, not the people that were obliged to take it from them.

Mal. 2. 7. [Cf. Hag. 2. 11.]

John 11. 51.

Matt. 23. 2, 3.

And when the Lord Jesus was to ascend in our nature into Heaven, He assured His Apostles, that He would be with them and their successors in the ministry of His Church "always unto the end of the world;" that the Holy Spirit should "abide with them for ever," and "lead them into all truth;" and that "he who heareth them, heareth Him." By which and the like expressions, He did not only promise His Apostles and their successors, the Bishops and Pastors of His Church, in all ages, to direct and assist them in the execution of their Office; but likewise required all people to hearken to them, as to Himself, and so to take the meaning of His Laws, as they by His direction should interpret them. And accordingly we read, that when there was a dispute among His first Disciples, about the law concerning circumcision and other Mosaic rites, they sent to the Apostles and Elders at Hierusalem, and took their interpretation of the law in that case, as given by the Holy Ghost Himself.

Matt. 28. 20. John 14. 16. Chap. 16. 13. Luke 10. 16.

Acts 15. 28.

And this hath been the sense and practice of the Church of Christ, as might easily be shewn, in all ages. Neither is there any Christian kingdom we know of at this day, but where the Ministers of Christ are consulted in all cases relating to religion and the laws of God: particularly in this kingdom, whensoever any laws are to be made, the whole clergy of the realm is summoned to appear, either in their own persons, or by their representatives in convocation, that they may be ready to give their advice, if there be occasion, in all such cases. Neither doth any law pass, without the advice of the lords Spiritual, as well as temporal. And therefore, when any thing is proposed that is repugnant to the laws of God, if they let it pass without shewing it is so, the fault will lie at their door, and they must answer for it at the last day. For it is to be supposed, that none of the assembly would agree to any such thing, if they knew it to be such; so that this is certainly the best course that could be taken, for those who are advised with to make laws, that they may be sure not to dishonour or offend, but "serve" the Lord by it.

But they will still "serve" the Lord more effectually in this high and honourable station, if they likewise establish,

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strengthen and enforce His laws and service with civil sanctions, as the Church doth it with Ecclesiastical or Spiritual. The Church, when it was first planted by Christ, and propagated by His Apostles, subsisted, as we know, and increased for near 300 years together, without the assistance of the civil powers, which were generally so far from shewing it any favour, that they endeavoured all they could to extirpate and root it up. And at this day, in many places, where the civil magistrates are all Mahometans or Heathens, the Church still stands upon its own legs, by virtue of that power which it receives from Christ the Head of it; who hath promised, that "the gates of Hell shall never prevail against it." He to whom all things are present, knew, that seeing no man can be saved but by Him, nor by Him without being a member of His Body the Church; therefore all the powers of Hell would set themselves against His Church, and stir up those upon earth also to oppose, and, if it were possible, to destroy it. But still it hath not only kept its ground, but got more; and will do so to the end of the world, notwithstanding all the opposition that men or devils can make against it: and all by means of that power which it hath within itself, to make laws and constitutions for the defence and government of itself, and for the better keeping up the true faith, and fear, and worship of God, and that obedience which is due to His laws entrusted with her; and to punish such as obstinately refuse to obey them, by casting them out of her society, and so cutting them off as rotten members from the Body of Christ, and to receive them in again upon their hearty repentance and promise of amendment.

Matt. 16. 18.

But although the Church be thus a distinct body of itself, under Christ the Head, yet He being the Head likewise "over all things to the Church," hath so ordered it, that many whole kingdoms have received His faith, and therefore taken His Church under their protection. In all which kingdoms, the Church is of the same extent with the nation itself, established by its laws, and so made a national Church, under the same king by whom the whole nation is governed; who is supreme head upon earth of that particular Church, under Christ the Head of all the

Eph. 1. 22.

Churches in the world: which taken all together, make up that which we call the Catholic or Universal Church.

Now, where a national Church is thus established, not only they who first established it, but all they also who make or advise laws, whereby she may more freely and effectually administer the means of Salvation, and exercise the power which Christ hath given her for that purpose, they also "serve" the Lord in it, not only by owning His authority, and defending His Church in general, but likewise because He will be thereby better served and worshipped all the kingdom over, than otherwise He would be, and will have more saints and servants there, who may be meet to live with Him and praise Him for ever.

Yea, by this means the whole kingdom "serves" the Lord; for when His "public service" is "established" by the laws of the kingdom, and all the people in it are required to "serve Him" accordingly, though there may perhaps be many particular persons who refuse or neglect it, that is only their personal fault, not the fault of the kingdom; which, as the kingdom, acts only by its laws. And if they require all the subjects to perform such worship and service to Almighty God, as His Church, upon mature deliberation, hath established and determined to be agreeable to His will, for the honour of His name, and the edification of His people, the whole kingdom, as such, performs it. And therefore all such as make or advise such laws, howsoever they may fail in other things, in that they plainly "serve" the Lord.

And so they do likewise by enforcing, with civil sanctions, the observation of any particular law of God; which is commonly broken or neglected, by such who having "their consciences seared as with an hot iron," have not so much sense of God or their duty to Him, as to regard the laws and censures of the Church. As for example, God hath strictly forbidden all men to take His sacred Name in vain, to curse, or to swear falsely by it; now when any sort of people in a kingdom are come to such an height of impiety, as to live in the constant breach of so plain Divine laws, if there be a law made for the restraining of them from it by "temporal penalties," which they are more sensible of than they are of "Spiritual;" though some of them may, perhaps, notwith- [1 Tim. 4. 2.]

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standing such a law, continue in any of these horrid sins, yet it will not be imputed to the kingdom itself as a national sin, because it hath sufficiently declared its abhorrence of it, and done what it could to suppress it. And all that have any hand in drawing up such a law against profane swearing and cursing, do not only "serve" the kingdom, but God Himself by it, in taking so much care that His holy Name may not be profaned, nor His laws slighted.

I need not instance in more particulars, where a word is enough. But I cannot but here call to mind, what excellent laws have been made in this happy kingdom; therefore happy, because such excellent laws have been made in it, that if they were but as generally observed, as they were piously made, this would certainly be the most glorious kingdom upon earth. But to our shame and grief be it spoken, many of our laws are neglected as much as if they had been repealed, and but very few kept as they ought in duty and conscience to be. I had rather pour in oil than rake in sores, especially those of a kingdom: but I cannot forbear taking notice, how, notwithstanding all our laws to the contrary, we have now many heathens among us, people that were never baptized or made Christians; and the worst of it is, that we are oft at a loss to know whether they be so or no. Of those who are christened, few are instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, because their parents refuse to send them while they are young, and they themselves afterwards think scorn to come. The great badge of our religion, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, is so shamefully laid aside, that a great part of the kingdom never receive it at all, and very few as often as the law requires. There are many about the city, as well as in the country, that never go to Church all the year, especially in great parishes, where they have not Churches enough to go to, and so "live as without God in the world." I dread to speak it, but I cannot help it, there are some, I hope not many among us, who are given up to such "hardness of heart, and contempt of God's Word," that they openly reject it; and others, near akin to them, who have the confidence to deny and oppose the Divine Power or Godhead of our ever Blessed Redeemer, and so strike at the foundation of

[Eph. 2. 12.]

the Christian, and all true religion; and that too, not only in their private discourse, but publicly in print.

These are some of the grievances, which, though I know not how to redress, yet, as a Minister of Christ, I could not but mention; heartily wishing, that all they who are entrusted with it, would "serve the Lord" as faithfully in executing the laws, as they did who advised and made them: we should then see another face both in Church and State. But, for that purpose, they must first keep the laws themselves, and so set the rest of the nation an example how to do it. And then they would do well to consider, that the best laws signify nothing, unless they be observed: and that all those who by their oath and place are bound to put the laws in execution, such especially as are made for the honour of God, unless they do it, they do not only fail in their duty to the king and their country, but to God Himself; and contract unto themselves the guilt of all the impieties and immoralities which are committed by their default and neglect, so as to make themselves obnoxious to the displeasure of God, and to all the punishments which He hath threatened in that case. We know what old Eli suffered for not restraining the vices and debaucheries of his two sons, when it was in his power to do it; and all because of the dishonour which was thereby cast upon the worship and service of God; who therefore, in the message He sent him, told him plainly, "Them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." From whence we may likewise observe, that He looks upon the contempt that is thrown upon His laws and service, as affecting Himself, and therefore will accordingly punish it: and that all who faithfully use the power committed to them for the suppressing of profaneness, and the promoting of piety and religion, they thereby perform the duty here required of them; they "serve the Lord," for they honour Him, and are accordingly honoured and rewarded by Him. 1 Sam. 2. 30.

And who would not "serve" so great a Lord? the greatest in the whole world, the Lord of Heaven and Earth, the Lord our Maker, the Lord our Saviour, the Lord and Judge both of quick and dead, before whom all mankind must ere long give account, how they have "served" Him in

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their several generations, and whether they have done it or not: happy are they who shall then be found to have "served" Him with the talents which He put into their hands. Let us hear what He Himself saith, "If any man serve Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall also My servant be. If any man serve Me, him will My Father honour." Where we have it from His own mouth, that they who "serve" Him upon earth, shall be and live with Him in Heaven, and shall be honoured by God the Father Himself: and what an honour is this, to be honoured by Him that is the fountain of all true honour! "This honour have all the Saints" and servants of the Lord Christ, who also Himself hath that respect for them, that whilst other people are left to the general providence of God, He takes them into His own particular care, interceding continually with the Father for them; by which means they are not only kept in the favour of God, but have "the light of His countenance" always shining upon them, and all things concurring to make them happy both here and for ever.

John 12. 26.

[Ps. 149. 9.]

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